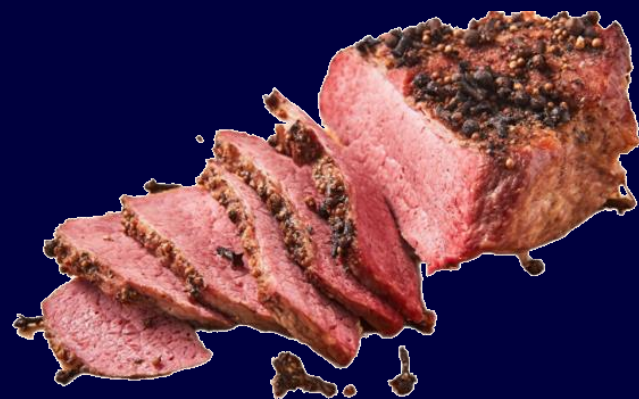


Spiritual Diet and Maturity

屬靈飲食與成長



Hebrews 希伯來書 5:11 – 6:3

Maryland Gospel Church 馬利蘭福音教會 7-31-22

Cooking and eating are important Chinese cultures. We know this too well and I don't need to elaborate.

Eating and drinking is also an important concept in the Bible. It is mentioned 1,207 times. From the very first chapter (Genesis 1:29) to the very last chapter (Revelation 22:17)

Eating and drinking have significant spiritual meanings in the Bible. Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Jesus once performed a big miracle in feeding 5,000 hungry men with just five loaves and two small fish.

Seizing on the opportunity, Jesus declared Himself as the bread from heaven and said unless man eat His flesh and drink His blood, they will not have eternal life in them.

This Biblical concept, combined with our Chinese culture makes eating in Chinese Churches an indispensable activity

Once a Chinese pastor joked that many church fellowships have turned into food specialists

專 契 變 專 契

Food is necessary for growth of life and for sustaining life
Since man is created with both a physical body and a spirit,
We must be nourished physically and spiritually.

However, we must be careful of what we eat.

Adam and Eve brought devastation to the entire human race because they ate the wrong food.

There is a saying: “You are what you eat”.
So, we must eat right, eat healthy and eat adequately.

Today’s Biblical text, Hebrews 5:11 – 6:3 tells us some people in the church remain as spiritual babies long after they have been born into the spiritual realm.

The text tells us this unhealthy phenomenon is related to their spiritual eating and diet.

Today we will dig into the text and troubleshoot the culprit that causes this health problem.

Foreword

前言

I should mention that part of today's message is from a sermon I preached 8 ½ years ago back in GCAC in the Cantonese and English services. I doubt anyone still remembers that message.

I feel there is a need today to repeat that message because most of us here are Mandarin speakers.

Besides, this sermon is an updated and expanded version.

寶貝，長大吧！



蓋城華人宣道會

Grow Up, Baby!

Hebrews 5:11 - 6:12



GCAC

March 9, 2014

粵語崇拜

2014年2月23日

希伯來書 5:11 - 6:12

Scriptures (part 1) Hebrews 5: 11-14

¹¹ We have much to say about Melchizedek, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.

¹² 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!

¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.

¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.



經文 (1) 希伯來書 5:11-14

¹¹ 論到麥基洗德、我們有好些話、並且難以解明、因為你們聽不進去。

¹² 看你們學習的工夫、本該作師傅、誰知還得有人將 神聖言小學的開端、另教導你們、並且成了那必須喫奶、不能喫乾糧的人。

¹³ 凡只能喫奶的、都不熟練仁義的道理、因為他是嬰孩。

¹⁴ 惟獨長大成人的、纔能喫乾糧、他們的心竅、習練得通達、就能分辨好歹了。

Regeneration is a Prerequisite to Growth

重生是成長的先決條件



Colin Smith, Senior Pastor
Evangelical Free Church
in Arlington Heights, Chicago

史密斯牧師
芝加哥亞靈頓崗 播道會
主任牧師

If you want growth, you have to start with life
成長始於生命的開始

Because dead things just don't grow
因為死物是不會長大的

Where does the Christian life come from?
And why do I sometimes feel more dead than alive?

Regeneration is a Prerequisite to Growth

重生是成長的先決條件

基督徒的生命從那裏來呢？

為什麼我有時覺得自己沒有生命像死的一般呢？

Regeneration is the root from which your Christian life grows

“重生” 就是基督徒生命成長的根源

Regeneration is the life that flourishes in sanctification.

“重生” 就是那催使人成聖的萌芽生命

It is the engine that drives your progress in holiness.

就是那推動人邁向成聖之路的發動機

The Problems with Some Members 一些會衆的問題

The writer of Hebrews was trying to make a connection of Christ's high priest ministry to Melchizedek (麥基洗德)
(Heb. 來 5:10)

But he realized his readers could not understand this deeper truth. So he paused to address their spirit problems before resuming the subject. He pointed out three problems the readers had.

Problem # 1: Learning disability (學習障礙)

Problem # 2: Immaturity (幼稚不成熟)

Problem # 3: Degeneration (退化)

These problems can be traced to two causes:

1) Eating problems (進食問題)

2) Feeding problems (餵養問題)

We will explore the first cause today in a 2-parts mini-series.

Problem # 1 Learning disability 第一個問題：學習障礙

Hebrews 5:11 tells us there were people in the congregation with learning disability.

Different translations of the Bible offer us different insights:

You are slow to learn. (NIV)

You become dull of hearing. (KJV & ESV)

You have been lazy and you haven't been listening. (CEB)
(i.e. you don't want to listen)

中文翻譯：聽不進去 / 聽不入耳 / 聽覺遲鈍 / 理解力遲鈍

This is actually a **heart problem**, not a hearing problem
Becoming dull means loss of interest and appetite, leading to numbness to what was heard.

Dullness is a **serious** spiritual health **warning sign**

What causes dullness and how does it progress ?

The author gave us some clues in the previous two chapters, when he warned his readers not to harden their hearts:

"Today, if you hear His voice, **do not harden your hearts**"

『你們今日若聽祂的話就**不可硬著心**』 (Heb. 來 3:7-8; 4:7)

Hardening → **Dullness / disinterest** → **Turning away**

Four Indications of immaturity

1. Spiritual maturity does not match their time in Christ

2. Unable to teach others. Every Christian ought to be a teacher
“go and make disciples of all nations...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mat. 太 28: 20)
“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! .. solid food is for the mature, Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant”
(Heb. 來 5:12-14)

看你們學習的工夫、本該作師傅、誰知還得有人將神聖言小學的開端、另教導你們、並且成了那必須喫奶、不能喫乾糧的人。

“We really only master something after we can effectively teach others. Teaching is the final step of learning.”

3. Unable to go deeper & higher, so they just repeat learning the basic truths of God over and over again

4. Even with repeated learning, they were still unfamiliar with Biblical truths and lack ability in spiritual discernments.

Problem # 3 : Degeneration

第三個問題：退化

You **become such** as have **need of milk**, and not of **strong meat**. (5:12 KJV)

you **have become** like babies who have need of milk, and not of solid food. (5:12 BBE)

They were not like that before, but have degenerated and **have become like babies** now and can only take “milk”

Milk is the elementary teachings / principles of God's word
Milk is essential for infants, but far from adequate for grown-ups

Solid food is the "meatier" truths, such as understanding the connection between Jesus and Melchizedek, such as the doctrines in the Pauline epistles (保羅書信中的教義)



Which Food Group Do You Like ?

你喜歡那一類食物？

水菓蔬菜 Fruits and Vegetables



嫩肉 Tender / Soft Meat



韌肉 Strong / Tough Meat



Is it Solid Food or Strong Meat in Hebrews 5:12, 14 ? 來 5:12, 14 是指飯、乾糧抑或韌肉？

Most English translations, such as NIV use the word **SOLID FOOD** in Heb. 5:12 & 14 . But several other translations (King James, Wycliffe, Tyndale, RHE, TMB) and quite a few Bible commentators use the word **STRONG MEAT** (tough meat 韌肉) instead. Use of the word 飯 in some Chinese translations is totally out of line with the author's intention.

The word **STRONG MEAT** (tough meat 韌肉) carries a deeper meaning than solid food as we shall see.

Tough meats (韌肉) are tough doctrinal subjects in the Bible

Such as how Christ compares to Melchizedek (麥基洗德) in Hebrews 5-8 and such as the doctrine of election (揀選的教義)

The Apostle Peter referred to the letters of the Apostle Paul as difficult subjects:

“Our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. **His letters contain some things that are hard to understand**, which ignorant and unstable people distort. 我們所親愛的兄弟保羅、照著所賜給他的智慧、寫了信給你們。信中有些難明白的、那無學問不堅固的人強解 (2 Peter 彼得後書 3:15-16)

Milk & Strong Meat Comparisons

靈奶與韌肉的比較

Milk 靈奶

Milk is given to the child by the mother (church)
靈奶是母親(教會)給孩子的食物

Milk is a predigested food. No chewing (thinking & exploration) is needed 奶是預先消化了的食物，不需要咀嚼(反思與探討)

Milk builds up the bones (for the frameworks of spiritual life)
奶用是為建立骨骼(屬靈生命的框架)

Milk is the truth of what Jesus did (redemption & justification) 靈奶是基督完成了的救贖和稱義真理

No life has to die to produce milk
奶水的產生不需要任何生命死亡

Strong Meat 韌肉

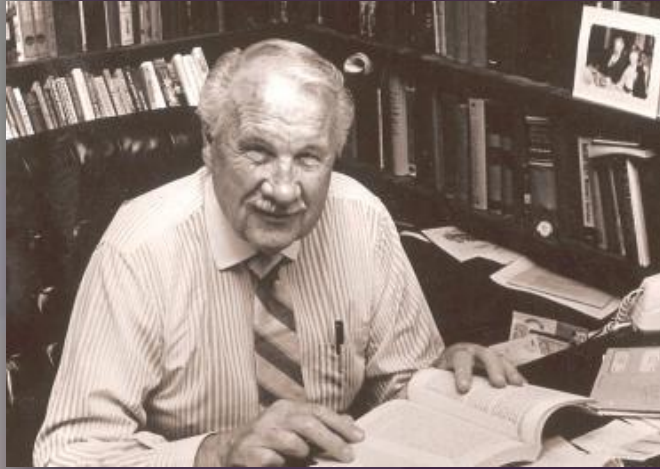
Meat has to be hunted and the meal has to be prepared by oneself
韌肉是要自獵和自煮的

Strong meat requires a lot of chewing and digestion by the individual. 韌肉需要很多咀嚼工夫才能消化

Meat builds up the muscles (for the activities of spiritual life)
韌肉是為增強肌肉(用於屬靈生命的活動)

Meat is the truth of what the Spirit is doing (sanctification) 韌肉是聖靈現今使人逐步成聖的真理

A life (the flesh) has to die to produce meat 一個生命(屬肉體的生命)需要死亡才有肉吃



Ray C. Stedman (1917-1992)
long time pastor, Peninsular Bible Church,
Palo Alto, California

加利福尼亞州帕洛阿爾托市
半島聖經教會長期牧師，

“Is it not rather startling that often the sole topics of many ministers dwell on the “simple gospel” ?
They preach them over and over again.

“許多傳道人的唯一話題常常停留在“簡單的福音”上，
這不是很令人吃驚嗎？
他們一次又一次的重覆講同樣的信息。

Because this simple gospel is preached unendingly
in our churches, we have Christians who are weak,
childish and immature.

因為這個“簡單的福音”在教會中不斷地重講，所以我們有軟弱、幼稚和不成熟的基督徒。

I have long been convinced that the greatest cause of the weak state of evangelical Christendom today is preachers who never realize that, in preaching what they call the “simple gospel”, they are feeding their people upon milk. They never get beyond the foundation.”

我一直堅信，當今福音派基督教界軟弱無力的最大原因是傳道人沒有意識到，在他們傳講所謂“簡單的福音”時，他們正在用靈奶餵養他們的羊群。於是他們便滯留在基礎水平上”

Ray C. Stedman,
Peninsular Bible Church,
Palo Alto, California

Reflections on “Milk” and “Meat” 對“奶”和“肉”的反思



Bob Deffinbaugh, founding pastor,
Community Bible Chapel
Richardson, Texas

德克薩斯州理查森市
社區聖經教會 創會牧師,

One very successful mega church conducted a study which produced some very unexpected results. 一個非常成功的大型教會進行了一項研究，產生了一些非常出乎意料的結果。

They learned that while they did a good job of attracting “seekers” and of evangelizing many, they had done far too little to instruct and challenge those who were more mature believers.

他們了解到，雖然他們在吸引“尋道者”和傳福音方面做得很好，但在指導和挑戰那些較成熟的信徒方面做得太少了。

Reflections on “Milk” and “Meat” 對 “奶” 和 “肉” 的反思

They were a “Dairy Queen” church,
but not a “Steak and Ale” church.

他們是 “乳品皇后 Dairy Queen” 般的教會，
但不是 “牛排和啤酒 Steak and Ale” 般的教會。

The fact is that we must be both.

We must nurture new believers by feeding them
with “milk” and we must challenge those older
in the faith with “meat”.

事實上我們必須兩者兼而有之。

我們必須透過餵 “靈奶” 來培養新信徒，
同時我們要用 “肉食” 挑戰在信仰上年長的一輩。

Maryland Gospel Church
馬利蘭福音教會

So MGC must be BOTH a dairy house as well as a steak house



The Significance of Weaning a Child in the Bible

孩子斷奶在聖經中的重要性

According to Jewish custom, the time when a child is weaned is a great cause for celebration. A weaned child can now eat solid food rather than breastfed by the mother.

The Bible mentioned the weaning of three great men in their childhood

- 1) Isaac 以撒 Genesis 創 21: 8-10
- 2) Moses 摩西 Ex. 出 2: 1-10
- 3) Samuel 撒母耳 1 Sam. 撒 上 1: 20-28

[聖經上三個偉人斷奶之後](#)



[link for a Chinese article](#)

The Bible recorded that Abraham was so joyful on the day Isaac was weaned that he set up a great feast 設擺豐盛的筵席
But on the same day Ishmael, Abraham's other son from Hagar mocked Isaac, causing Sarah to be so furious that she demanded Ishmael and his mother Hagar be cast out from the family
(Gen. 創 21)

This event grieved Abraham very much. He could object to Sarah's demand, but God told him just do what Sarah said and Abraham obeyed God.

The Significance of Weaning a Child in the Bible

孩子斷奶在聖經中的重要性

There is an important implication in this story

Isaac represents a promised child, a spiritual life, a regenerated life begotten according to God's will.

Whereas Ishmael represents a child begotten according to man's will, a carnal life from flesh and blood. (Genesis 創世記 16)

Galatians 加拉太書 5:16-17 tells us that the spirit (Isaac) is at war against the flesh (Ishmael) constantly (聖靈和情慾相爭)
Even today, we see the descendants of Isaac (the Israelites) are at war with the descendants of Ishmael (the Arabs)

Furthermore, Galatians 加拉太書 4:20-31 tells us there is a spiritual meaning in casting out Ishmael.

When Isaac was weaned (mature and strong enough), Ishmael (the carnal life 屬血氣和肉體的生命) has to be cast out.

The implication is, as long as a Christian stays on milk, he is not strong enough to cast out his carnal old nature.

What Is a Weaned Child Like ?

斷奶的孩子是什麼樣的？

King David described himself as a “weaned child with his mother” in Psalm 詩篇 131: 2

“I have stilled and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me”

“我的心平穩安靜、好像斷過奶的孩子在他母親的懷中。
我的心在我裡面真像斷過奶的孩子。”

A weaned child is no longer interested in gratifying himself, but is able to quietly rest at his mother's bosom, he can appreciate his mother not for what she can give him, but for who she is.

A weaned child learns to use forks, spoons and utensils to feed himself. He discovers and starts appreciating other foods

A weaned child is weaned from self-will, self-seeking, from things that he depended on for his satisfaction.

A weaned child learns to walk and starts doing things himself

A Christian weaned from spiritual milk is acquainted with the teaching about righteousness and trained to distinguish good from evil (Heb. 來 5: 13,14; Eph. 弗 4:13-14)

Lay the Foundation and Move Towards Maturity

立好根基、邁向成熟

Scriptures (part 2) Hebrews 6: 1-3

- 1** Therefore let us **leave the elementary teachings** about Christ and **go on to maturity**, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,
- 2** instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
- 3** And **God permitting, we will do so.**



經文 (2) 希伯來書六章 1 - 3 節

- 1** 所以我們應當**離開基督道理的開端**、**竭力進到完全的地步**。不必再立根基、就如那懊悔死行、信靠神、
- 2** 各樣洗禮、按手之禮、死人復活、以及永遠審判、各等教訓。
- 3** 神若許我們、我們必如此行。

The elementary teachings in 6:1-2 is the “milk” referred to in the previous chapter, is the **foundation stones of the Christian faith.**

Lay the Foundation and Move Towards Maturity

立好根基、邁向成熟

While the foundation is essential for building the Christian life, but it makes no sense to lay the foundation over and over again. It just needs to be laid once and laid correctly.

The trouble with some Christians is they have never finished laying the foundation so they are unable to build their Christian life on it and unable to go on to maturity

Having reproofed his readers of their immaturity, the author of Hebrews challenged them to move on to maturity if they have already laid the foundation.

We will now watch a 6 minutes preaching on Hebrews 6:1-3.

This video comes in both English and Chinese versions, but because of time, we will only play the Chinese version.

I will send out the English video clip afterwards.

The video will also mark the end of today's sermon.

立好根基、邁向成熟

GO

我們繼續來講建立根基系列

視頻摘錄：
0:30-6:20

[【高畫質 修復版】悔改帶來真信仰（上）| 葉光明講座](#)

[← 視頻連結](#)

Lay the Foundation and Move Towards Maturity

GO

我們繼續來講建立根基系列

Excerpt :
0:44-6:35

[Through Repentance to Faith - Part 1 by Derek Prince](#) ← Video Link

Response Song

回應詩歌

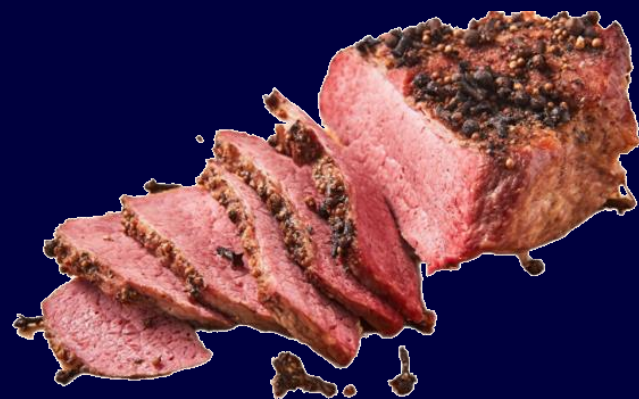
Come and Dine

來吃吧！



Spiritual Diet and Maturity

屬靈飲食與成長



Hebrews 希伯來書 5:11 – 6:3

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