

“Where Are the Donuts?”

“Where Are the Donuts?”

... And 30 Other Bible-Based Meditations

Series # 6

Roger Ellsworth

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First Edition: 2018

ISBN: 978-0-9965168-7-7

20180220LSI

Great Writing Publications

www.greatwriting.org

Taylors, SC

www.greatwriting.org

Purpose

My Coffee Cup Meditations are short, easy-to-read, engagingly presented devotions based on the Bible, the Word of God. Each reading takes a single idea or theme and develops it in a thought-provoking way so that you are inspired to consider the greatness of God, the relevance of the good news of the life, death, resurrection, and coming-again of Jesus, and are better equipped for life in this world and well prepared for the world to come.

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Dedication

To

Michael, Barbara and Katherine Butterfield

About This Book

This book is the result of the labors Roger Ellsworth and the thought he has given to various passages of Scripture over the years. You may read more about Roger on page 141.

We hope you will enjoy these Bible-based meditations. We would love to hear from you, so please send us a note to tell us what you think—which ones you liked most, and how they made a difference in your life or in the life of a family member, friend, or work associate. To reach us online, go to www.mycoffeecupmeditations.com/contact

MY COFFEE-CUP

MEDITATIONS

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- 1 -

From God's Word, the Bible...

*More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

*How sweet are Your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

*Your words were found, and I ate them,
And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;
For I am called by Your name,
O LORD God of hosts.*

Psalm 19:10; Psalm 119:103; Jeremiah 15:16



“Where Are the Donuts?”

It was our annual Christmas gathering. Our two sons, their wives, and their children were all present. Sylvia had worked long and hard to prepare a sumptuous meal. Turkey, ham, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, corn, sweet potatoes, and homemade bread were on the table. And waiting for us on the dessert table were pecan pie and cherry pie.

When the moment came that we had been eagerly anticipating, we took our seats. As soon as our youngest grandchild, Eramin, was comfortably situated in her high chair, she surveyed the table and asked: “Where are the donuts?”

I love donuts. I could eat them every day. I think I shall die peacefully if I have my Bible in one hand and a donut in the other. But donuts, as wonderful as they are, can’t give us the kind of nutrition we need to maintain our physical health and strength. For that we must have meat and

potatoes. We need vegetables and fruit.

The Bible uses our physical families to convey spiritual realities. As we are born into an earthly family, so we must be born spiritually. We must be, as Jesus said to Nicodemus, “born again” (John 3:3), and, by the way, we can take no more credit for our spiritual birth than we can for our physical birth (John 1:11-13).

When we are born again, we are “babes in Christ” (1 Cor. 3:1). We don’t begin our spiritual lives as full-grown, mature spiritual adults. We must grow. It’s fine for babies to be babies, but we don’t want them to remain babies. We want them to grow. If in ten years Eramin still prefers donuts over solid food, we shall have reason to be concerned.

The gracious God who gave spiritual life to us has also provided food for our growth. That food is His Word, the Bible. The Bible is marvelous in many, many ways. One of the marvelous things about it is that it is both milk and meat—milk for the spiritual babes and meat for those who have grown and are growing.

The Apostle Peter has a message for “newborn babes.” He writes: “... as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Peter 2:2-3).

The Apostle Paul, on the other hand, laments the fact that his Corinthian readers hadn’t progressed spiritually as much as they should have. He says to them: “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able” (1 Cor. 3:1-2).

The author of Hebrews observes that his readers appeared to be in a dietary reverse. They had gone from milk to solid food, but now they were going from solid food back to milk. They needed once again to be taught “the first

principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. 4:12). He tells them that they were "unskilled in the word of righteousness" (Heb. 4:13).

How do we know if we are making progress in the Christian life? How do we know that we are growing? Paul answers both positively and negatively. On the positive side, we are achieving a greater knowledge of Christ and becoming more like Him. On the negative side, we are no longer "children" who are "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men..." (Eph. 4:13-14).

Paul is clear. Spiritual growth doesn't mean that we leave behind those doctrines that pertain to the person and work of Christ and go into the deeper truths of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit Himself came to glorify Christ (John 16:13-15), and the more we grow, the more Christ-centered and Christlike we shall be. Those who are growing spiritually don't go around singing, "Less about Jesus." They rather join Eliza E. Hewitt in singing:

*More about Jesus would I know,
More of His grace to others show;
More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me.*

-2-

From God's Word, the Bible...

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Hebrews 5:12-6:2



Milk and Meat

We know the Bible is both milk for spiritual babes and meat for the spiritually mature. We also know that we are not to continue to subsist on the milk of the Word. We're to progress to the meat of the Word.

So we're face to face with an important question: at what point does the Word of God cease to be milk for us and become meat?

I mentioned in the previous reading that some think the milk of the Word has to do with Christ and His salvation, and we are to graduate from those truths to the greater truths of the Spirit. Imagine it! The Christian graduating from Christ!

But the Christian moving from milk to meat is not a matter of leaving certain doctrines behind. It is rather a matter of coming to a greater understanding of those doctrines. It is building on the simple doctrines that we heard when we first accepted Christ.

Doesn't the book of Hebrews tell us to leave "the elementary principles of Christ"? Yes, but this leaving shouldn't be

understood in the sense of departing from a place to never return again. It should rather be likened to a man building a house. He lays the foundation, and then he leaves it so he can go on to build on top of it. He doesn't leave the foundation by destroying it or by denying that it is there.

The author of Hebrews was concerned about his readers because, after laying the foundation and starting to build the house, they were acting as if they wanted to destroy the house and the foundation so they could start all over.

These people should have been at the meat level. That means they should have been able to teach others, and they should have been able to discern between true and false teaching (Heb. 5:12-14). But they were back at the milk level—unable to teach and unable to discern.

I was very much at the milk level in the early days of my Christian life. My understanding of salvation was very simple and elemental when I came to Christ. I knew I was a sinner. I knew Jesus was the Savior. I knew I must repent of my sins and trust Jesus as my Savior. I came repenting and believing, and I was saved.

But I didn't stay there. As I read God's Word, read about God's Word, and heard godly men preach, I began to move off the milk level to the meat level. It wasn't that I ceased to be interested in Christ and salvation. Far from it! I became more and more interested in Him and His work of salvation. As I learned, I was amazed at the glories folded into the simple gospel.

For example, if I had been asked as a new Christian to identify the three mediatorial offices of Christ (prophet, priest, and king) and explain each one, I would have been at a loss. With the passing of time, however, I learned about these offices and rejoiced in them.

If I had been asked on the day of my conversion to explain how Jesus could pay for our sin in the six hours He

was on the cross, I would have been bewildered.

On the other hand, I was easy prey in those days for those who had mistaken notions about Christ and His redeeming work. I now shake my head in amazement at some of the “teachings” that I simply accepted at face value. One especially comes to mind—that teaching that suggests that God tried first one plan of salvation, then another, then another, and finally decided to send His Son. The truth is God has always had only one plan of salvation, and that plan is His Son.

Am I where I want to be and need to be in the spiritual realm? No. After all these years, I can say with Paul: “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended...” (Phil. 4:13).

When it comes to the deep truths of Christ, there should be an end to the milk, but there will never be an end to the meat. There will always be more to understand, and each new understanding will bring greater wonder and awe.

-3-

From God's Word, the Bible...

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Revelation 19:7-9



A Groom Flat on His Back

All was ready. The decorations were in place. The crowd was pouring in. The music was playing. It looked as if it was going to be a beautiful wedding indeed. There was only one problem: the groom was lying flat on his back on the floor in my study. He was sick—really sick. It soon became obvious that he wasn't going to be able to go through the wedding ceremony.

As the minutes ticked away, we became so concerned that we decided to call for an ambulance. While we were waiting for it to arrive, I stood before the audience to tell them that the wedding was canceled because the groom was sick. A wave of laughter rolled across the gathering. They seemed to have immediately assumed that he was merely suffering from wedding-day jitters. So I hastened to add that he was so sick that we had called for an ambulance. A hush fell over the audience as they realized the seriousness of the matter.

When I stepped back into my study, the bride was kneeling beside her groom. “We want you to marry us right now,” they said. “You don’t want to reschedule?” I asked. “No,” was the firm reply, “marry us before the ambulance gets here.”

So that’s what I did. With the groom lying on his back and his bride kneeling beside him, they exchanged their vows and their rings. I pronounced them to be husband and wife, and seconds later the paramedics arrived and whisked the groom away.

I have seen my share of wedding-day disasters—dropped rings, fainting groomsmen, missed cues, and misbehaving flower girls and ring bearers—but I had never seen anything quite like this. It was my most unusual wedding.

You’re wondering about the groom? He spent a day or two in the hospital suffering from acute something or another. The doctors got him on his feet, and he and his bride were off on their honeymoon.

The Bible tells us about some unusual weddings. Jacob thought he was marrying Rachel but woke up the next morning to discover he had actually married her older sister, Leah (Gen. 29:21-30). Samson married a Philistine woman who cried all of the seven days of their wedding feast. The feast ended with Samson calling her a “heifer,” and she ended up marrying Samson’s best man (Judg. 14:17-20). Jesus attended a wedding feast in which “they ran out of wine” (John 2:3).

The Bible also tells us about a wedding that will take place in heaven. It is the wedding of the Lord Jesus Christ and His bride, the church (Rev. 19:7-9). That’s one wedding that will go off without so much as a single hitch. No one will get sick. No one will be late.

I’ve heard many a bride express her desire for everything to be “perfect” for her wedding. Perfect weddings seldom