
Subject: The Idols we worship in Christianity (No. 2)



Dear Saints

In our previous mail, we've said a couple of things concerning the prophetic word and our relationship to it. Today we'll be dealing with:

Sugar!

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there was a king in a country far, far away.

It was a beautiful country, and the king was a good king. He loved his people and ruled fairly for many years. The citizens of the country were happy and loved their king.

The king appointed governors in every province - who acted wisely on his behalf. The king also appointed spokesmen in each province who would speak to his people in his name. He built schools and put able teachers in them to teach his people. In every town he appointed a mayor to look after the interests of the town and its people. He also appointed ambassadors who would travel to faraway countries. They were to tell the peoples of the earth about his beautiful kingdom.

Then came a famine. The sun was hot, the rain stayed away and the earth became dry and arid. The people suffered. They had no food or water.

So the king decided to open his storehouses. In these storehouses he had plenty of healthy food and water that he had wisely stored up over many years. In his storehouses he also had a new, unknown food. He had secretly imported this from a faraway country to treat his people. The name of this food was: Sugar!

The king told his spokesmen in the provinces to speak to the mayors of each town: "Tell them to go to my storehouses and get food for my people for as long as the famine would last!"

When the people heard this, they rejoiced and were happy again. Every day the mayors brought them food and water from the storehouses. Everybody had enough good food to eat and water to drink.

And for the first time they also tasted sugar! They sprinkled it over their food in the mornings, the afternoons and the evenings. They put it in their coffee and tea. The mayors saw that the people loved sugar, and thought up recipes to bake cookies and make candy. Everybody ate and had their fill of the sweet stuff. And they were happy.

Then the rains came again. The soil became moist and crops sprouted from the earth.

The king closed his storehouses and told his people to grow their own food as before.

But now the people were unhappy. "Where is the sugar?" they asked. "We want sugar!"

So the mayors of the towns called a meeting. They decided to import their own sugar. They set up shops from where they sold sugar to the people.

Now the people were happy again. Again they sprinkled sugar over their food in the mornings, the afternoons and evenings. They put it in their coffee and tea. They baked cookies and made candy. They even put sugar in their water!

The mayors sold much sugar and became rich. They saw that the people always came back for more sugar. They told the teachers in the schools: "Teach the kids to eat lots of sugar!" They sent messages to the ambassadors in the faraway countries to tell the peoples of the earth about their good king and his country of sugar.

The king was very sad about all this sugar business. He watched as the mayors got richer and greedier. He watched as his people grew lazier and fatter. They didn't eat healthy food anymore. They ate spoonfuls of sugar in the mornings, the afternoons and the evenings. They drank sweet coffee and tea. They ate cookies and candy. And they drank fizzy, sweet water! The teachers taught the kids in school to eat more sugar. The mothers gave their babies sweet water instead of milk. Everybody's teeth rotted away and their breath went foul! They were lazy and fat. Many became ill, suffered much and died.

The ambassadors heard of this and were ashamed. They loved their good king, but his kingdom wasn't good anymore. They were not sure what to tell the nations of the earth about their king's kingdom anymore.

So the king sent his spokesmen to his people. "The king says you should eat healthy food again!" they told the people. They showed the people the wheat, grain, vegetables, fruit and meat they used to eat before.

But the people became angry. "We don't want that!" they shouted. "It is hard to grow crops and food! We cannot chew vegetables and fruit since our teeth have rotten away! We want sugar!" And they drove the spokesmen from their towns. They even killed a few.

The mayors were happy. "If ever these spokesmen would show up again, we must kill them all" they told the people. "We will" said the teachers and the parents. And the mayors were happy that the people would always return to them for sugar.

When the king heard this, he became very angry. He called a meeting of his governors and told them: "I know where the root of this problem lies. Sugar is good when one eats little of it. It gives people energy to do things for my kingdom. But my people have now grown used to eating too much of it. They are so lazy and fat that they cannot grow crops anymore. And from childhood they get taught to eat only sugar. They have no appetite for good food anymore, and their teeth have rotten away! Hence, they become ill, suffer much and die."

"My mayors who are supposed to look after them are exploiting them. My mayors become more powerful and greedy every day. And they supply my addicted people with this excess. They have even killed my spokesmen whom I have sent to save them from their folly."

"So, my dear governors, this is what I am going to do ..."

...

And they lived happily ever after.

The End.

Dear reader, what do you think did the king do?

What would YOU have done if you were to be the king?

This is a rather serious question, since the parable above tells the story of today's church. The regular church member has been raised on spiritual sugar. And as long as its sweetness will keep them coming back, church leaders (the mayors) will carry on feeding their members spiritual sugar.

But sugar has absolutely no nutritional value. It cannot build strong bones and teeth, strong muscles or strong immunity systems. To build that, one needs to eat fruit,

vegetables and meat. Sugar does not cultivate any healthy appetite for such foodstuffs. And when a life-long diet of sugar has eaten away one's teeth, one simply CANNOT chew these - even if you wanted to! The result is a spiritually fat, unhealthy, lethargic, lazy church that has no desire to find or cultivate its own spiritual food, but wants to be spoon-fed sweet things week by week.

I hope you've recognized the five-fold ministry in the parable above. Before you take a glance at the legend at the end of this session, please re-read the story above, and see whether you could recognize Jesus, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the story.

The Scriptures do not mention **sugar** as the Christian's primitive foodstuff. It speaks of **milk** - an infinitely more nutritional foodstuff than sugar:

*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk,
so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,
now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

- 1 Pet. 2:2 - 3.

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

*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!

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

But solid food is for the mature,

who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

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,

instruction about baptisms,

the laying on of hands,

the resurrection of the dead,

and eternal judgment.

And God permitting, we will do so.

- Heb. 5:11 - 6:3.

Milk is for babies. Spiritual milk is for spiritual babies - teachings about repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. Why do these authors call those teachings spiritual "milk"?

Simply because these topics deal with the spiritual birth of a new believer:

In order to be considered properly born, a new believer needs to repent of his sin, to have faith, to be baptized and to receive the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit. These are the very first things a new believer needs to know and experience.

The next he needs to know is what he'd signed up for: Resurrection from the dead - in stead of eternal judgment.

And voilà! - there's your newly weaned convert!

I'm afraid few church members today have even received any spiritual milk. Most have only had sugar.

How do we know that?

Well, simply ask any regular church member to explain repentance, faith, baptism and the laying on of hands to you - and you'll have a rather embarrassed, disarranged Christian in front of you. Mention the resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment and you might be accused of fundamentalism!

And that's just the MILK! We haven't even started to speak about solid food!

What do regular church members desire to hear in church?

Well ... about God's love for us.

About God's forgiveness, gentleness and patience.

About the humble Jesus who died for us.

How He heals the sick.

How He picks up the downtrodden.

About the Holy Spirit our comforter.

How He touches us in worship.

About His beauty.

About His good thoughts for me.

About love in the family.

About reconciliation.

About how people got saved.

About how we need to look after animals and the environment.

After a hard week at work where I had to face the world to further my own interests, I want to be soothed and nursed on Sunday by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

I want to hear that I'm still all right.

And that Jesus loves me.

And serves me ...

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine.

Instead, to suit their own desires,

they will gather around them a great number of teachers

to say what their itching ears want to hear.

- 2 Tim. 4:3.

The things above are good things. They are true. They supply us with energy to do the work of the Kingdom. They are precious Christian assets.

But if that's ALL we hear and want to hear, they turn into sugar. They will make us ill and cause our spiritual death. They will cause us to lose our appetite for solid food and meat.

What is it that church members DON'T want to hear, and what is subsequently hardly ever preached about, and much less practiced?

Well ... about repentance and dying to self.

About taking up one's cross and marching in public like a fool who's been tried and convicted.

About personal sacrifice and paying the price of the Kingdom.

About blood, sweat and tears.

About personal humiliation.

About physical, emotional or spiritual suffering.

About taking inspired physical, financial and relational risks for the sake of the Kingdom.
About personal integrity, fear of God and obedience until death.
About taking up the sword of the Spirit and driving back the darkness.
About raising the dead and driving out demons.
About standing up for truth and rejecting lies.
About losing money, relationships and favour with men for the sake of favour with God.
About fervent prayer and soul-wrenching intercession.
About God's order.
About us serving Him ...

This is solid food.
Even the few who ever hear this, hardly ever practice it.

The sugar addicts in the parable above would probably have called any citizen who would practice a normal, healthy diet by derogatory names, such as "health fanatic", "veggie" or "fruitcake".
Similarly, sugar addicted Christians have invented derogatory names for those with a normal Christian diet: "Fundamentalists", "zealots", "radicals" and "so heavenly minded they are of no earthly good".

Somehow we'll have to get the fruit and vegetable gardens of Christianity growing again. Somehow we'll have to cultivate an appetite for tomatoes and berries, pumpkin, peas, broccoli and spinach. Somehow we'll need to lose our fear of blood - and kill a sheep and slaughter a bull and eat its meat. Somehow we'll have to obtain the grace to chew them with our rotten teeth, to swallow and to keep them down! Somehow we'll have to grow up!

Why?
Because the King is in a meeting with his governors. He is about to say what He is going to do about the sugar business. And when the King's spokesmen haven't been heeded - and killed - He shows up Himself. Then it is time for judgment.

Shall we repent of our Sugar Idol now?

[Legend: The King = Jesus. Governors = Apostles. Spokesmen = Prophets. Ambassadors = Evangelists/missionaries. Mayors = Pastors. Teachers = Teachers. See Eph. 4:11]

To be continued ...

Next week:
Episode 1: The Bible.

(If you are too curious to wait for next week, you may read the rest of the article on our website: <http://trumpetcall.co.za/articles.php?id=35>)

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