Sizzling Brats

Okay, so that’s what those little terrors get for refusing to come in out of the sun! Why Usinger or anyone else would name such delightful sausages after disobedient delinquents, we’ll never know.

Sizzling brats brings to mind this passage: “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?” (Matthew 23:33).

Now there is a passage that sizzles. The calm and comforting image we usually associate with Jesus’ name, doesn’t jibe with His unbridled anger toward those who “shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces” (Matthew 23:13). Being sentenced to hell has to be the ultimate sizzle.

Are broods of vipers still up to no good today?

Yes, indeed. And they are far more threatening than your neighbor’s willful kids. While much spiritual warfare takes place beyond your consciousness, plenty more goes on right before you. Those who wish to shut the kingdom of heaven in your face aren’t shy about it. They have plenty of sizzle themselves, fueled by the Sultan of Sizzle, Satan himself. They are Satan’s brats. And they don’t like you.

The first serpents we might identify are all the faith traditions that compete with Christianity. Without naming names, you probably know some of this extensive brood! Some of them preach peace, others incite violence, and still others cloister themselves in self-sufficiency. Some even camouflage themselves in Jesus’ name, while perverting Scripture. How can you tell when a “religion” is poisonous? If Christ is not at its center, it slams heaven’s door in your face.

The next vipers who threaten us are all those whose goal is to suppress the name and saving victory of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it is a national government that outlaws God’s Word and imprisons or executes those who preach it. Sometimes it is organizations within an otherwise democratic country that attack any signs of the cross or mention of Jesus Christ. And sometimes it’s those we elect to government office that betray Christian belief—legally and in the name of political correctness or financial propriety.

So, should a brat sizzling on your grill make you lose your appetite—guilt by association? Should you tremble in fear or seethe in anger when you witness attacks on your faith—and you, by association? There’s nothing wrong with showing a few emotions here, but remember one important thing:

“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else
in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38).

By the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul knew the identity of the sizzling brats. By the power of the Holy Spirit, working through the Word, you know them too. And God protects you from their power to do anything but make you angry, frustrated, fearful, or annoyed. Those are just emotions. You have Jesus! You have a personal Savior who lived, died, and rose for you.

So, praise God. Say grace—and live it. Grill yourself a brat, but be careful. That sizzle is hot!

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To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Phil. 4:20)