

EXPOSITION OF I PETER

Message #5

I Peter 1:22-25

One of the tendencies I have observed over the years is that when some people have trouble and get depressed, they sit home and stop coming to church, which is the exact opposite of what they should do because the one thing that can truly give emotional and spiritual strength is the living Word of God. When you are going through trials and troubles, when you are under pressure a critical key to you continuing to become an award winning grace reflector is the Word of God. That is exactly what the Apostle Peter believed and that is exactly what he teaches here.

How could we, who are sinful, ever expect to partake of God's Holiness? Through the Word of God. To show you how important the Word of God is to all of this, in this context Peter uses four different Greek words in specific regard to the Word of God:

- 1) In **verse 22** the Word of God is the real truth (αληθεις).
- 2) In **verse 23** the Word of God is the revealed truth (λογος).
- 3) In **verse 25** the Word of God is the spoken truth (ρημα).
- 4) In **I Peter 2:6** the Word of God is the written truth (γραφη).

It becomes quite clear that Peter believed a key to holiness, a key to joy, a key to survival was the Word of God. Dr. John Henry Jowett, who was pastor of a church in New York in the late 1800s and London in the early 1900s, said the first clauses here show that the Word of God gives us the mode of growth and the second clauses show us that the Word of God is the cause of growth (*The Epistles of St. Peter*, p. 56).

Now when you are going through tough times, you can begin to back away from others, focus on yourself and forget about other believers. I think we've all been there. The Apostle Peter knew that it was imperative that Christians stick together, worship together, survive together. In order for that to happen they need the Word of God. So when Peter writes this section of Scripture, what he says is this:

IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT GOD HAS USED HIS WORD TO CAUSE US TO BE BORN AGAIN, WE NEED TO BE A GRACE REFLECTOR OF THE WORD BY OUR FERVENT LOVE FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST.

One of the most powerful statements we may make to this world as a church is that we love one another. I cannot begin to tell you the times I have talked to someone about coming to church and their concept of church is all they do is judge one another, verbally abuse one another, undermine one another and fight with each other.

The relatively easy part of being a believer is to love the Lord, whom we have seen (I Peter 1:8). The relatively difficult part of being a believer is to love each other that we have seen. But this is our responsibility. In view of the fact that God has used His eternal Word to save us and save every believer, there ought to be a love for one another.

When you are going through difficult times, and deep, dark trials, one of the best helps you will ever have is knowing someone else is there for you and cares about you and is praying for you. It is an uplifting encouragement to know that someone loves you and is on your side. God wants us to be loving and caring people, especially to those hurting, even when we ourselves are hurting and the thing that can produce this is the Word of God.

Now I would like to break this text down into three main component parts:

COMPONENT PART #1 – The main challenge to love one another. **1:22**

Verse 22 begins by saying “since we have had our souls purified in obedience to the truth,” which speaks of the judicial work of God in declaring us holy and righteous and of His work in imputing to us the righteousness of His Son the moment we believed on Jesus Christ. The “obedience to the truth” is, as Dr. Clowney said, the moment you submitted to “the claims of the gospel” (*I Peter*, p. 75).

The moment we believed our souls were purified. The word “purify” (αγνιζω) is one that means the moment you believe on Jesus Christ, God cleanse and purifies your soul from all condemnatory defilement. The perfect tense of the participle indicates that this occurred at one moment in the past and continues to purify you in the present and right on into the future. You are forever pure from all condemnatory sin by faith in Jesus Christ. In view of this powerful cleansing work of God we are to “love one another.”

The pronoun “another” (αλληλους) refers to another of the same kind, not a different kind. We are commanded to love each other who have experienced God’s cleansing grace.

Now in **verse 22** there are two different Greek words used for “love.” The first is philos (φιλος) which is a brotherly fellowship kind of love. The second is agape (αγαπη) which is God’s highest kind of love, which wants the best for another. **That is the way we are to love each other - as friends who want God’s best for each other.**

Now keep in mind that Peter was one who struggled with loving and associating with Gentile believers. One time, Paul had to withstand him to his face because he shied away from Gentile believers and showed partiality to the Jews (Galatians 2:11-14). We see here, however, it was a true spiritual grace development that enabled Peter to not just reach out to Gentile brothers and sisters in Christ, but to love them.

COMPONENT PART #2 – The challenge as to how we are to love one another. **1:22**

The challenge is to love one another and both types of love are to be out of our heart. The preposition “out of” our hearts (cardias-καρδιας) from which we get our English word cardiac, means we are to love as a friend and as God would love right out from the midst of our hearts. **Some believers apparently have missed this point because they believe it is their specific job to criticize one another out of their mouths, rather than love one another out of their hearts.**

Dr. Chuck Swindoll told the story of when Andrew Jackson was a major general of the Tennessee militia. During the war of 1812, Jackson's troupes reached an all time low in morale. They started arguing and fighting among themselves. General Jackson called them together and said, "Gentlemen! Let's remember the enemy is over there" (*Hope Again*, p. 45).

That is exactly what Peter was after. Believers need to love one another and keep in mind other believers aren't the enemy.

There are two specific ways in which we are to love:

(Way #1) - We are to love one another in a friendship way that is sincere. 1:22a

The word "sincere" refers to a motive that is pure and unblemished. Not a play acting or pretending love but a love that is real. Our brotherly love for another believer should never be like playing a part on a stage. It should be real. We should not ever do anything that could blemish our brother or sister in Christ. Our motives should always be pure motives. We should not be given to brother or sister bashing. There should never be gossip groups or sarcastic putdowns. People at church should be friendly in a sincere way.

(Way #2) - We are to love one another in a Godship way that is fervent. 1:22b

The word "fervently" or "earnestly" (εκτενωϋς) is a rare Greek adverb and it means to love something fervently in the sense of stretching out or reaching out or reaching forth (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 142). Peter wants us demonstrating our Godship love for one another by reaching out to each other and not by isolating ourselves from one another. People should sense they care about me, they will help me, they will reach out to me, they want what is best for me.

The motive is a pure motive out of a pure heart. There is no hidden or secret agenda. The motive is pure and the heart is pure. When we make an effort to stretch out or reach out to another believer, because we love them because they are in God's family, we demonstrate God's grace to this world.

COMPONENT PART #3 – The reason why we are to love one another. 1:23-25

In these verses, the Apostle Peter paints one of the most powerful pictures you will ever see of the Word of God. Peter believed by virtue of the fact that God used His eternal Word to save us and every other believer, we have a debt we owe each other and that is to love each other.

Now there is one main reason Peter gives to love one another - God used His Word to cause you to be born again.

Our natural birth requires two people - a man and a woman. It requires a biological father and a biological mother. Our spiritual birth also required two parents - the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Our spiritual birth was determined and sanctioned by God the Father and God the Son. These two members of The Godhead determined that we were going to be born again.

In order to get us into this born again relationship with God - **God used His Holy Spirit to bring us under conviction and He used the Word of God to bring us to faith in Jesus Christ.**

He elected us, He caused us to be born again, he redeemed us with His Son's precious blood and He planned all of this before the world was even formed. Then He permitted us to experience His grace. He used His Spirit and His Word to bring us to Jesus Christ and bring us into His family.

Do not miss Peter's theology. He did not believe we were born again by our decision. He believed we were born again by God's elective decision and He used His precious Word to save us. We were chosen (1:1; 2:9), we did not do the choosing. Dr. H. A. Ironside said, theologians can wrangle all they want, but here is the truth, we were born again by the Word of God (*I Peter*, p. 23). The same is true for every person who is truly born again. **The primary motive we have for loving one another is that all in God's family have been born again by the same God and by the same Word of God.** It is impossible to love God's Word and hate God's people.

Now in these verses there are seven powerful facts about the Word of God:

(Fact #1) - The Word of God is not perishable seed. 1:23a

The word "perishable" is one that means that the Word of God is not able to be corrupted, decayed or destroyed (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 469). Since you have been saved by the Word of God your salvation cannot be corrupted, decayed or destroyed.

(Fact #2) - The Word of God is imperishable seed. 1:23b

The antithesis of God's Word not being perishable is that it is imperishable. What this means is that since the Word of God has saved us, our salvation is immortal, totally free from any thing that could cause us to perish.

(Fact #3) - The Word of God is a living Word. 1:23c

The Word of God is alive and it brought us to spiritual life. The present tense of the participles "living" indicates that the Word of God is continually alive, it is habitually alive and it will always be alive.

(Fact #4) - The Word of God is an abiding Word. 1:23d

What this means is that the Word of God will continually stay, remain and abide. God's Word is forever. Peter's point is that since you have been born again by this Word, your salvation is forever. It will never be lost.

(Fact #5) - The Word of God is not like our flesh which is like grass. 1:24a

Our flesh will wither just like grass.

(Fact #6) - The Word of God is not like our flesh which is like a flower . **1:24b**

Flower petals fall off, just like we fall.

(Fact #7) - The Word of God abides forever . **1:25**

Peter's point here is that God's Word abides forever and since it is God's Word that has saved our souls our salvation is forever. Not due to us but due to His Word which saved us. **Peter says you use your words to love one another because God used His Word to save our souls.**

At the end of **verse 25**, Peter says "this is the word which was preached to you." There are three points of critical observation in these nine English words:

1) - The noun "word" (ρημα) has as its emphasis what was spoken . It is primarily used two ways - to speak verbal words and to talk about an event or object. **By using this Greek word, Peter is stressing that the things he was presenting about God saving us through the Word of God and through faith in Jesus Christ, were the very things continually verbally talked about and preached.**

2) - The participle "preached" (ευαγγελισθεν) is aorist passive, meaning these people had been the recipients of the good news concerning the specific redemptive work of Jesus Christ on their behalf.

3) - The verbal "is" (this *is* the word) is present tense. What all this means is that these believers had continually been verbally taught these things about Jesus Christ and God's gracious election to salvation. From day one these believers had been taught God's truth from God's Word. What has God done for us?

He tracked you down in all of your sin and He allowed you to come to faith in His Son, whose blood washes your soul clean. In view of this, should we not be willing to love one another?

Every person in this church deserves to have you be their friend. Every person in this church deserves that you love them at the highest level. Why? Because of the fact that God saved your sinful soul just as He did theirs.