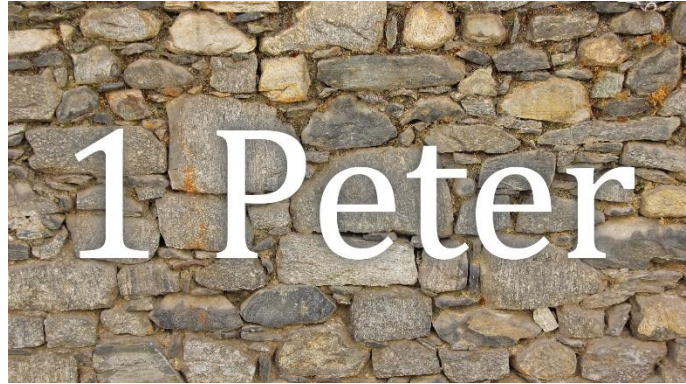


1 Peter

Part 5 – Love Earnestly

1 Peter 1:22 - 2:3

As chapter one draws to a close, Paul transitions his attention to the relationships the exiles have with one another. In light of their faith in Christ, these first generation Jewish and Gentile believers are to relate in a specific way. As those who have been born again, they are to love one another deeply. This love is not a mere tolerance, flattering, or pandering. Their care for each other is to be sincere and earnest reflecting the



grace and truth of the gospel they have believed. It was not an easy calling for a culturally diverse group who were exasperated by a variety of trials. What can unite a tired and oppressed people inclined toward selfishness, jealousy, and slander? The love that will bind the redeemed must find its source in the Redeemer. Peter points to the word of God as the means of their new birth as well as the means to transform their hearts toward brotherly love.

Peter draws on the Old Testament to broaden his audience's grasp of the good news, which has been proclaimed since the first exile in Genesis 3. The gospel and its implications for all of life was the sustenance the exiles needed, the provision we need today. Christ's church is to long for and crave the word of God, which leads it to grow up into salvation. The Christian never outgrows the basics. Love your brothers and sisters earnestly. Feed on the word of God.

Main Idea: Born again Christians are to love one another earnestly and depend on the word of God as the source of truth, hope, and salvation.

1. Love earnestly (1:22)

- Scripture often follows the pattern of telling us what is true before it commands us to do something. In verse 22, the command is preceded by truth concerning our identity. As if saying, "In light of who you are as believers, love earnestly."
- Brotherly love, different from the love we have for neighbor or our enemy, concerns the relationships among those within the church.
- Earnest love puts us at risk of being hurt. It also opens us up to the great joy of being known, cared for, and loved.
- We were created to be loved earnestly—sincerely. We do not desire to be tolerated. Tolerance is a concession. It is neither kind nor loving.
- Earnest love celebrates grace and holiness, calls sin what it is, and points to the true source of forgiveness.
- Grace and truth are two sides of the same coin. Both must be offered together in Christian relationship. Truth offered without grace is no longer truth, but judgment. Grace offered without truth is no longer grace, but license.
- The world declares itself inclusive and kind under the banner of tolerance. Mistakenly they offer license to sin or permission to pursue self-love.

- Biblical brotherly love is different, difficult, risky, and costly. Loving earnestly, full of grace and truth, is a work of the gospel in the lives of God's people.

2. Remember your new birth (1:23-25)

- Continuing with the metaphor of birth, Peter speaks about the seed of human procreation. The physical seed of man is perishable, but the seed of the word of God is imperishable. The first leads to death, the second to life.
- Isaiah 40:6,8 is referenced to enhance the contrast of how physical seed, now that of plants, leads to death but the word of the Lord remains forever. Peter calls the truths from Isaiah 40 the good news. The gospel is the story of redemption that encompasses both the Old and New Testament.
- Being a Christian means we struggle against our sin, rather than being identified by it. Ephesians 4:22-24 states, "Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt though deceitful desires."
- Your sin was your master, but no more. In Christ, you are declared a saint. You are now a saint who wrestles and fights against sin. However, God's word affirms you who believe on Jesus Christ, no longer bear the identity of sinner.

3. Put away malice (2:1-3)

- Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander. These sins divide relationships, divide communities, and divide churches.
- We want power and control. This desire is heightened when there is the threat of control being taken away from us. If we have power, we do not want to lose it. If we do not have it, we long for it believing it delivers freedom.
- When we are around people who are different from us we feel less secure—vulnerable. The gospel informs us that power and control are an illusion. Only God is in control and possesses true power. In Christ, we are free to relinquish our quest for dominance, our expectation of fairness, our preoccupation with retaliation.
- Romans 13:14, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."
- Pure spiritual milk. Long for what you need. Long for the simple means God has declared for our health, our good, our salvation. This pure milk is the word of God, fellowship with his people, the sacraments, and prayer. Feed on these things. Taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8).