

1 Peter
(Week 12)
07/25/2021
Love One Another!

This is my message written out prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

S1 - Introduction & Review

- If you have your Bible, please turn to **1 Peter**.
- **(God willing)** we'll finish **chapter one today**.
- But to do that we need to cover **4 verses, 22-25**.
- Let me read those to you as we begin...

S2 - *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you. (1 Peter 1:22-25)*

- Now last week I did an extensive review of **verses 1-19** and then we covered **verses 20-21**.
- So, I'm **just** going to hit the highlights today.
- I want to briefly remind us of the **context** for today's message.
- Now the first thing I want us to remember is who Peter is writing to.
- The letter begins...

S3 - *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion... (1 Peter 1:1)*

- Peter is writing to **elect exiles**.
- And in verse 3 he tells us what it means to be **elect**.
- Speaking of God, he writes...

S4 - *According to his great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, (1 Peter 1:3-4)*

- The elect are those who have received God's great mercy.
- Those who God has chosen and caused to be born again.
- That includes Christians in Peter's day and in ours.
- If you've trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you have received God's mercy.
- He has caused you to be born again.
- And you are therefore part of the elect!

- But along with being elect Peter also refers to his readers as **exiles**.
- Those who are suffering from various trial and persecutions that come from living in a fallen sinful world.
- A world that is not their home.
- So, Peter is writing to elect exiles.
- And in the **first 12 verses** he seeks to encourage them (and us),
- He wants to give us **hope** as we live as exiles in this fallen world.
- He wants us to rejoice and be grateful for all God has done and will do for us.
- Especially for our imperishable, undefiled, unfading inheritance that is waiting for us in heaven.
- Then in **verses 13-21** Peter gives three foundational commands.
- This is how the elect are to live as exiles in this world.
- First, in **verses 13** he writes...

S5 - ...set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
(1 Peter 1:13)

- Live in Hope.
- Then in **verse 15** he adds...

S6 - but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, (1 Peter 1:15)

- Live in Holiness.
- And finally in **verse 17-19** we read...

S7 - And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Peter 1:17-19)

- Live in Fear.
- Again, we are not to fear condemnation for our sin.
- But we are to fear our fathers' judgments of our sin.
- And we are to fear devaluing the sacrifice of Christ by our sin.
- Then following these three commands, in **verses 20-21,**
- Peter, **for the purpose of holiness,** seeks to increase both our fear of devaluing Christ's sacrifice and our hope in God.
- And he does this by exalting Christ.
- Because of who Christ is, and what he has done,
- we have reason to both fear devaluing his sacrifice and to put our faith and hope in God.
- So in **verses 1-21,** Peter has encouraged us...
- He has given us three foundational commands.
- And he has exalted Christ, seeking to increase our hope and fear...
- That we might live in holiness.

- That we might be **Holy as our Father in Heaven is Holy**.
- And then, beginning in **verse 22** and continuing throughout the rest of the letter.
- With Joy and Gratitude for all Christ has Done.
- And with these foundational commands of Hope and Holiness and Fear ringing in our ears.
- **Peter gets specific about** how we who are elect, are to live as exiles in this world.
- This is what it looks like to live in hope and fear.
- This is how we are (in this sinful fallen world) to be Holy as our Father in Heaven is Holy.
- And the first thing Peter focuses on is our relationships with one another.
- In **verses 22-25** he will command us to **Love One Another**.
- Now Peter didn't invent this command.
- It's a theme throughout Scripture.
- And Peter certainly heard it time and time again from Jesus Himself.
- In **John 13**, speaking to his disciples (including Peter) Jesus said.

S8 - A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (John 13:34)

- And in **John 15** Jesus reiterated this command

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12)

- So, Peter got the command directly from Jesus.
- And it certainly applies to all believers at all times.
- But Peter also knows, as do we, that those who are living as exiles,
- Those who are facing suffering and persecution and trials need one another in a special way,
- We need the extra encouragement, support and love of our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- I remember a number of years ago, I was experiencing great difficulty in my life.
- I would share specifics with you but it involves other people so I can't.
- But the point is, I was suffering emotionally and spiritually like I didn't think was possible.
- And during that time there were **three things that sustained me**.
- **First**, my relationship with God.
- My faith in His Love and the promise that all things work together for good, for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)
- **Second**, my relationship with my wife Christina.
- Even though she was experiencing the same difficulty I was.
- Our love and support of one another was crucial.
- But along with God and my wife there was a third thing that got me through this terrible time.
- There were godly men in my life who loved me.
- Men who prayed for me.
- Men who cared for me, who counseled, comforted and consoled me.
- These men served as the body of Christ to me,

- They were God's hands and feet and mouth and ears in a great time of suffering.
- They demonstrated God's love for me in practical ways.
- And in so doing they helped me through this terrible time.
- So, loving one another is commanded at all times.
- But the need to demonstrate that love will often occur during times of great difficulty.
- And Peter is writing to those who experiencing great difficulty.
- His desire is that they will be there for one another.
- That they will care for, encourage, support and love one another.
- And so, in his letter to elect exiles he repeats, and I believe further explains Jesus' command to love one another.
- And as we examine this command,
- I pray that God's word will cause us to grow in our ability to obey it.
- I pray that Bridges church will be a place where God's people truly love one another.
- And to help us along the way, Peter begins with...

1. **S9 - The Preparation to Love one Another**

- At the end of **verse 22** Peter gives the command to...

...love one another earnestly from a pure heart. (1 Peter 1:22)

- We will look at that shortly.
- But before Peter gives this command, he tells us how we've been **prepared to obey it**.
- And this is crucial because many people are confused by the fact that God commands us to experience emotions.
- I have heard it said, I don't have control over my emotions, so how can God command me to rejoice, to love, to be grateful to hope, even to fear Him and not to fear other things.
- And in an effort to make it possible to obey these emotional commands,
- We change the definitions of the words from emotions to actions.
- Specifically love, love is redefined as an action, not a feeling.
- So even if I don't feel love for this person, I can obey God's command by acting as if I love them.
- Doing loving things for them and by this I believe I have obeyed the command to love.
- Well, it might be okay to do loving things when you don't feel love.
- But don't call it love and don't think you have obeyed the command to love.
- You may have done the best you could at the time, but God wants so much more for us.
- He wants our hearts, our emotions, even more than our actions.
- And he has every right to command you to earnestly LOVE from a pure heart.
- **First** of all because he is God,
- But second of all because he has prepared your heart to Love.

- Verse 22 begins with these words...

S10 - *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, (1 Peter 1:22 ESV)*

- Last week we mentioned that this word purified (*hagnizo* in the Greek)...
- is related to the word holy (*hagios* in the Greek)
- Both words include the ideas of sanctification and purification, being cleansed.
- So, we got the meaning of the word **purified**.
- But what does Peter mean by ***“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love”***
- We can break this down into three parts.
- First, ***Having purified your souls***
- Second, ***By your obedience to the truth***
- And third, ***for a sincere brotherly love***.
- Let’s walk through them in order...
- **First,**

S11- *Having purified your souls... (1 Peter 1:22)*

- This is what has been done to prepare you to love one another.
- That word **souls** is the Greek word *psyche* and it refers to the essence of who you are.
- We could translate it your **hearts** as well.
- And so, Peter is saying that your souls (who you are) has been purified, sanctified, cleansed.
- And because of that you can now love one another.
- Now when he writes **“Having purified your souls”** is sounds like he’s saying that we purified our own souls.
- Like if I said to my wife, ***“Having cooked dinner”*** the assumption is that she cooked dinner.
- So ***having purified your souls*** the assumption is you purified your soul.
- And that takes us to the **second** part of this verse...

S12 - *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth...”*

- This is how your souls were purified.
- And again, this sounds like we purified our souls when we obeyed the truth.
- That our obedience caused our purification.
- And in a sense, that’s true.
- But we have to ask what **truth** is Peter talking about?
- And what does it mean ***to obey that truth?***
- Well, in context the truth that Peter is referring to would be the truth that he just wrote.

- So, let's back up to **verse 18** and read the truth...

S13 - *knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (1 Peter 1:18-21)*

- I think it is clear that Peter is proclaiming the truth of the gospel.
- That by his precious blood, Jesus ransomed us from our futile sinful ways.
- That Christ, and therefore God's plan of salvation, was known before the foundation of the world.
- That Christ took on human form, he became one of us that he might die for us.
- That Christ enables and empowers us to believe in and be reconciled to God.
- That God Raised Christ from the dead proving his victory over sin and death.
- And that God Glorified Christ, showing his sacrifice was all sufficient and through him we too will share in His Glory.
- That is a summary of the truth, that Peter is speaking of.
- And we call that truth "**The Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ**"
- So, we got the truth, now what does it mean to obey that truth.
- Well, Peter tells us at the end of **verse 21**...

S14 - *so that your faith and hope are in God.*

- Obeying the truth of the Gospel is believing putting your faith your trust in that truth.
- In the finished work of Jesus Christ.
- Not trusting in yourself for your salvation or your sanctification but trusting fully in Christ.
- That is what it means to obey the truth of the gospel.
- And so, it's by obedience to this truth, by putting your faith and hope in God, in Jesus Christ that your soul is purified.
- That you are cleansed by God, that you are made holy.
- We see this also in **Acts 15** at the Jerusalem Council.
- Speaking of Jews and Gentiles, **Peter (same guy) says this...**

S15 - *and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. (Acts 15:9)*

- It is God who does the cleansing the purifying but he does it in response to faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- So now we understand what Peter means by the first **two components**...

S16 - *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth*

- But then **thirdly** he adds...

for a sincere brotherly love, (1 Peter 1:22 ESV)

- This why our souls have been purified by our obedience to the truth.
- Now I would have thought Peter might have gone bigger and written...
- **Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth** Live in Purity, live in Holiness.
- But instead, he focuses in on one aspect of our life... **sincere brotherly love.**
- What Peter is saying is this...
- Since you have obeyed the truth of the gospel which results in a pure soul (pure heart).
- You can now experience **sincere (true) brotherly love.**
- God has **prepared** you to obey his command to love for one another.
- Now the phrase **brotherly love** is the Greek word **Philadelphia.**
- And it means brotherly of family love, affection, it is an emotional feeling you have for those who are near and dear.
- And for believers, for those whose souls have been purified, our family includes our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- So, Peter is saying...
- At least one of the reasons God purifies our souls is so that we will **sincerely love our brothers and sisters in Christ.**
- And for me this highlights the great importance that God puts on **loving one another in the body of Christ.**
- Because our salvation involves more than just ourselves or our relationship with God.
- It also includes our relationship with one another.
- God has saved us and purified us that we might have the ability to love one another.
- To care for and to encourage one another,
- When God saves us, he saves us into a family,
- and as part of that family, God has prepared our hearts that we might sincerely love one another.
- And again, that love is often needed most in times of trials and suffering.
- So, Peter has told us that our souls have been purified by obedience to the truth for sincere brotherly love.
- That we have been Prepared to Love one Another.
- And then the command comes, I can command you because I have prepared you.

- So at the end of Verse 22 we get...

2. S17 - The Command to Love one Another

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, (1 Peter 1:22)

- This is the heart of what Peter is communicating in these verses.
- He is saying that the fact that your heart has been purified means you are now prepared to sincerely love your brothers and sisters.
- But just because your soul has been purified for a **sincere brotherly love**.
- Doesn't necessarily mean you will automatically practice sincere brotherly love.
- Thus, the command comes...
- I have prepared your heart, I have transformed you soul...
- NOW **love one another earnestly from a pure heart**.
- In Christ, you have been given a pure heart, a heart that can love sincerely.
- So out of that pure heart, **love one another earnestly**.
- Here Peter switches from brotherly love (Philadelphia) to agape love.
- This is the word that the NT uses most often for love,
- for God's love for us and our love for God and other.
- And by using both Philadelphia and agape I think Peter is just saying we need to really love one another.
- Peter is calling believers in Jesus Christ to a sincere, earnest love for one another.
- Our love must be **genuine**.
- **It must come from the heart, it must be real, it must have affection and emotion.**
- We must give ourselves fully to loving one another.
- If you were with us through our study in Romans.
- You might remember **Chapter 12:9-10**, where Paul gives a similar command...

S18 - Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. (Romans 12:9-10)

- Now it took me **three sermons** to cover these two verses in **Romans**.
- And much of what we talked about then would apply to Peter's command to love one another earnestly from a pure heart.
- But instead of focusing our time on defining what it means to love one another earnestly.
- Which, I think most of us get.
- We get what we are supposed to feel and do.
- My guess is even if you weren't with us for **Romans Chapter 12**.
- You've heard plenty of sermons on what it means and the importance of loving one another.

- So, I'm going to assume that we understand that God commands us to love one another earnestly, sincerely, genuinely.
- We know this command to love one another is a foundational part of the Christian life.
- However, the important thing is are you able to obey it.
- Do you on a consistent basis love your brothers and sisters in Christ earnestly, genuinely.
- Do you feel love for them, do you have an emotional love for them...
- And do those feelings translate themselves into actions?
- Do you desire and truly seek what is best for them?
- Do you gratefully give them the best of you?
- Do you joyfully share your time with them?
- Do you gladly seek to comfort and encourage them when they are in need?
- Well, I don't know about you, but I struggle to feel and to do these things.
- I struggle to obey God's command to love others earnestly (even my brothers and sisters in Christ).
- And I think Peter understood our struggle, so in **verses 23-25 he focuses on.**

3. S19 - The Power to Love one Another

- We get the command to love, but we struggle to obey it.
- And so, following the command to...

...love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

- Peter continues...

since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (1 Peter 1:22-23)

- Follow Peter's logic
- The command is given *"love one another earnestly from a pure heart"*
- Why or How?
- Since/because you have been born again.
- Remember in **verse 3** Peter said that...

S20 - According to [God's] great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1 Peter 1:3)

- By his mercy God has caused us to experience NEW BIRTH, NEW LIFE.
- To have a new life, to have our hearts purified, to be justified and declared righteous.
- To be given a living hope.
- A real genuine hope in the eternal inheritance that he promises.
- This relates to what Peter has already said **in verse 22...**
- Having purified your souls through obedience to the truth.

- And because of that you can, and you are to love one another earnestly from your new pure heart.
- Or put simply a New Life (a pure soul) is **to** Result in a New Genuine Earnest Love for One Another.
- Now that makes sense, right?
- It makes sense that our love for one another is the result of being born again.
- That God's demonstration of love for us by causing us to be born again through the death and resurrection of His son,
- and God's transformation of our lives, giving us a new heart, a pure soul.
- All of that should result in us loving others especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- As the Apostle **John put it...**

S21 - *We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)*

- So, understanding our new birth,
- Understanding the depths of God's love and mercy he showed for us.
- Understanding that he has purified our souls.
- Should result in our being able to love one another.
- Our new birth prepares our hearts for and gives us the power to love one another.
- That make sense right.
- And if Peter ended there, I think that would have suffice.
- But that's not where he ends...
- Let me read **verse 22-23** again...

S22 - *...love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (1 Peter 1:22-23)*

- **Now what does that mean?**
- Peter claims that love not only comes from being born again,
- But specifically, from being ***born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through living abiding word of God.***
- Or put simply: Love one another earnestly since you have been born again through the imperishable word of God.
- So, the question is why does Peter, at this point, include the living and abiding Word of God in our ability to love one another?
- What is his logic?
- Well, let's look a little closer at the passage.
- Notice that he uses the word **seed**.
- **you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable**
- Now we know that even perishable seeds produce new life.
- The seed of an oak tree, after falling to the ground, possesses the power to bring forth new life.
- A sapling emerges and grows because all of the necessary life-giving properties were present in the seed from the beginning.

- And Peter is saying... **so it is with God's Word.**
- You were born again through a seed that is imperishable.
- And that seed is the living and abiding word of God.
- Like a seed, the Bible is alive, and it therefore causes not only new life **but growth**,
- the Author of Hebrews writes...

S23 - For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

- The word of God is living, and it is able to give life,
- But it doesn't end there, along with new life the word of God, like the seed has all the properties to cause us to grow to bring about transformation in our lives.
- John Piper recounts a story that bears witness to the life transforming power of God's Word.
- He writes:
 - Consider the story of "Little Bilney," an early English Reformer born in 1495.
 - He studied law and was outwardly rigorous in his efforts at religion.
 - But there was no life within.
- Then he happened to receive a Latin translation of the Greek New Testament.
- And here is what happened: Binley says...
 - I chanced upon this sentence of St. Paul
 - O most sweet and comfortable sentence to my soul!
 - in 1 Timothy 1:
 - *It is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief and principal."*
- This one sentence, through God's instruction and inward looking, which I did not then perceive, did so exhilarate my heart, being before wounded with the guilt of my sins, and being almost in despair, that . . . immediately I . . . felt a marvelous comfort and quietness, insomuch that "my bruised bones leapt for joy."
- After this, the Scriptures began to be more pleasant to me than the honey or the honeycomb.
- Notice: it was simply exposure to God's Word that brought transformation to "Little Bilney".
- He simply read a sentence in the Word of God, and life entered into his soul.
- The Word of God contains within itself all the properties necessary for new life and for transformation.
- And that ought to revolutionize our understanding of the power of God's Word to bring forth life and change in our lives.
- The prophet Isaiah wrote...

S24 - For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10-11)

- Do you see what Isaiah is saying and how it applies to what Peter is saying?
- It's really amazing.
- The Word of God has power to accomplish God's purposes.
- And at least one of God's purposes for you and for me is that ***we love one another earnestly.***
- So, what does this mean practically.
- If you're struggling to love others (especially your brothers and sisters in Christ).
- Or if you need to grow (like we all do) in our emotional capacity to experience love for others.
- How does God's word empower us to love?
- Well, I think Peter gives us some help in **verses 24-25.**

S25 - for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." (1 Peter 1:24-25)

- **How does that help you ask?**
- Well, it's interesting to note that Peter grounds his argument for love on a quote from **Isaiah 40.**
- Contextually, **Isaiah 40** comes on the heels of a prophecy that said God's people would go into exile.
- God's people were in need of comfort.
- And Peter chose this portion of Isaiah to bring comfort to his own **exilic community of Christians.**
- And that comfort (and power) comes by shifting our focus from self to God and his word.
- **So quoting Isaiah Peter says...**
- ***We are flesh, we are like grass or even flowers, but both wither and fall.***
- We are like the perishable seed.
- And therefore, if we rely on our own ability to love we will eventually fail.
- However, take comfort the word of the Lord remains forever.
- It is through the abiding living word of God that we are given new life.
- Life which includes a prepared pure soul and the power to love one another.
- Peter then concludes by **reminding his readers...**

S26 - ...And this word is the good news that was preached to you. (1 Peter 1:25)

- You got it you heard it...
- The word of God, specifically the gospel of Jesus Christ which you heard, which you received which you believed.
- Which brought you into relationship with God.
- This word is living and abiding, it is alive and powerful, it accomplishes God's purposes.
- It is able to bring about new life and transformation.
- It (NOT YOU) is able to cause you to earnestly love one another.

- The power to love one another does not come from your ability to cause yourself to feel love for others.
- If you are struggling to love anyone (but specifically one of your brothers or sisters in Christ) you will not be able to love them by focusing on **them** or by focusing on **yourself**, your inability to love.
- The key, the Power to love one another (or dare I say) to accomplish anything in the Christian life comes through living abiding word of God.
- Because it is within the pages of this Book that God has chosen to reveal himself.
- We are not empowered by reading words on a page.
- We are empowered by growing in our knowledge and understanding of and obedience to who those words reveal.
- The word of God reveals who God is.
- And as we come to know him in greater and deeper ways.
- We are transformed, we grow in our ability to live the Christian life.
- We grow in our ability to love one another.
- Our power to love one another comes from our relationship with God through His word.
- So, for example when you read in God's word...

S27 - Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

- When you read and take this passage in...
- You understand that loving one another comes from God,
- it comes from being born again (or being born of God).
- Why because God is Love.
- And it is through the living abiding word of God that we know that he is love.
- And that we know that it is because of his love for us that we can love one another.
- And when we take that in, **we are changed.**
- When we stop trying to love in our own power.
- And instead focus on growing in our relationship with God through his word.
- Then we will be empowered to love, because the God who is Love will transform our hearts.
- So often we try and love in our own power, but we can't, I can't you can't.
- We can only love through the power of God,
- and that power is manifest in our lives when we are walking in relationship with Him.
- When we are getting to know him and his purposes through His imperishable word.
- So bottom line.
- Obedience to this command to earnestly love one another from a pure heart.
- Is not a matter of in yourself choosing to love?
- Or of dutifully doing acts of love, thinking you are obeying this command.

- Earnestly loving one another it is a matter of knowing the God who is Love through his living abiding word.
- And allowing him to transform you into one who earnestly loves his brothers and sisters in Christ.

- So, let's get really practical.
- If you want to grow in your love for others.
- If you want to experience who God has prepared you to be.
- Get out your Bible and spend time reading, studying, meditating on who God is and who he has made you to be.
- Grow in your relationship with Him, grow in your love for Him.
- And he will empower you to earnestly love his children, your brothers and sisters in Christ.

- Would you pray with me to that end in our lives!