

We have seen a lot so far in the first 21 verses in our study of 1 Peter. And there is much more to come. Basically, Peter has told the pilgrims of the dispersion – that is, those who had to flee their homelands because of their faith, all the blessings and benefits of their salvation — the blessings that had come from God through the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. He writes to them to encourage them in the midst of their suffering and persecution, and to tell them of the joy that they can still have because of their faith.

I would encourage you to look or listen online at past sermons to see all that God has given His children – and if you need a copy because you don't have a computer, let me know.

We have seen also, that as a result of the blessings of salvation, that there is an exhortation to holiness, and then as we saw last week, that the salvation that we have, while free to us, was bought with the precious blood of Christ.

It is this foundational truth that leads Peter to the next foundational truth that he wants his readers to know. Turn with me to 1 Peter 1:22 – 2 Peter 1:2 (READ).

Now, notice what he says – that as a result of the fact that they were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ there needs to be sincere love of the brethren – that they needed to love one another.

Again, this is nothing new. We should recall the Great Commandment, which we say every week – which we find in Matthew 22:37-39: *“Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

I would remind you these two commandments were quoted by Jesus and they are from the Old Testament. So there is really nothing new – God's people were always to love him, and then to love one another – and this was to be a sincere love.

But, as he goes on, he tells them that this love can only come from God – 1 Peter 1:23 (READ). This love that we are to have for one another has its foundation in the new birth – the fact, as he says that we are born again.

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, says this in John 13:34-35: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

And the Apostle John, in his first letter says this in 1 John 4:7-11: *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”*

He tells us the fact that we were born again, not with “*corruptible seed*” – that is, through human power, but with “*incorruptible seed*” – which he then defines as God's Word. It is the clear teaching of the Scriptures that God's divine truth is made the instrument of giving life to the soul through the Holy Spirit.

James 1:18 says: *“Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”* John 1:12-13 says: *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

God’s Word is truth – it is eternal truth ... and as Peter says it *“lives and abides forever.”* We all know that the Scriptures are under attack today. Even though the Bible continues to be the number one selling book, year in and year out – people DO NOT hold it to be the eternal, true, enduring Word of God.

You have whole denominations denying that it is God’s eternal Word ... you have churches trying to distort what God has said ... you have churches saying clearly that God does not mean what He says.

They say that it is a great book ... that he has some great teachings ... that it has some great history, poetry and narratives. But, they do not believe what God says ... they pick and choose what they want to follow ... they say that God is everywhere and has spoken in other places ... but they don’t believe that it is the only Word of God and that it is to be our sole rule of faith and practice.

Yesterday, as I taking my mother to see her sister, I saw a sign at a church which said, very succinctly – *“The Bible is a Banquet, not a Snack Tray”* – meaning that you cannot pick and choose what you want to believe about the Bible.

As I have said before, we live in world created by God, and He has been gracious enough to give us an instruction manual on how to not only live in this world, but in the world to come. God has not changed. What He said 2000 or more years ago, and has preserved for us through the ages is still relevant today.

The 10 commandments and the Summary of the Law are still in force today – all that God said is still applicable today. The only thing that is not applicable is that which was fulfilled in Christ – the sacrifices and ceremonial laws and also the rules for Israel as a Theocracy, with God as their king.

Again, simply put, if God, in His Word, says that we should be doing something, then we better do it. If He says in His Word that we should not be doing something, then we better not be doing it. Because His Word is our final and ultimate authority – not the word of man or of culture or society.

Peter emphasize the eternal enduring nature of God’s Word by quoting from Isaiah 40:6-8 where we read: *“The voice said, “Cry out!” And he said, “What shall I cry?” “All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”* Exactly what Peter tells his readers AND us.

Look at how Isaiah and Peter describe us – we are like a blade of grass that withers. Not a very comforting thought, is it? We are like a flower that fades. We are here one minute and gone the next. We are temporary ... we are fleeting. However, the Word of God endures for ever.

And it is this Word of God that has the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ – the Gospel that was preached to the pilgrims of the dispersion and the same Gospel that was preached to us. That Gospel being simply, *“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”*

It is the Gospel that gives us eternal life and all the other blessings of our salvation. It is the Gospel that gives us the living hope that we have in Christ. It is the Gospel that tells us that we have a place prepared in heaven for us that is guaranteed by God Himself. It is the Gospel that will help us in times of persecution and trouble. It is the Gospel that is clearly taught in the Word of God, but can only be understood by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

It is the same Gospel that was preached by the Apostles ... the same Gospel proclaimed since the time of Christ ... the same Gospel that will be proclaimed until he returns. The Gospel that is contained and revealed in God's eternal Word.

And I might add, it is the only Gospel. There aren't other Gospels – there is only one, because there is only one Savior. Jesus clearly taught this in John 14:6, where he says: *“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

As Jesus also said in John 3:16-17: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”*

This is the Gospel that we believe, because we believe what God has revealed in His Word. And that is why Peter continues, in what we know as chapter 2 – remember the chapter and verse divisions are man made – listen to what he says – 1 Peter 2:1,2 (READ).

We see that there two very important things here – first, there is a call to repentance – to turn aside from all of those non-Christian attitudes and behaviors that were part of our lives before we became Christians, and still are there to a certain extent – but now we do not need to follow them ... we do not need to act that way ... we do not need to be that way because we have the Holy Spirit that we enable us to do what is right before God.

But we see that not only does Peter tell us what not to do, but he also tells us what to do — and it is very simple – look at what he tells them: 1 Peter 2:2: *“as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,”*

We all know that a newborn babe desires their mother's milk – it is in their nature – we do not have to teach them how to nurse – it is something that they are born with. Something in them tells them that there is nourishment there that will satisfy their hunger and their cravings. Peter tells us to be like babies and desire the pure spiritual food of the Word of God. It is God's Word that will satisfy us ... it is God's Word that will fill the spiritual void that is there.

Peter tells us that by doing so we will grow – just as a baby that fills up on his mother's milk will grow.

When I was child in Sunday School we used to sing a little song that went this way: “read your Bible and pray every day and you'll grow, grow, grow...” Those words of that child's song are still true today.

We need to read the Bible, everyday if possible ... We need to study God's Word ... we need to meditate and think about what it says and we need to pray every day. If we do these things we will grow ... we will know what God wants us to do ... we will know what God requires of us ... we will know what God does not want us to.

BUT, we have to study and know His Word in order to so.

So, as always we see a practical application to what God has said in His Word. He not only tells us what to do, but He tells us how to do it, and how He will bless us if do. We must remember always that His Word is the standard ... the foundation of what we believe. We must not add to it ... we must not subtract from it. All that we need for life and godliness is in there ... in His Word and let us therefore follow His Word, read it, study it and live by it.