

1 Peter 1:22-25

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴For, "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls off, ²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word which was preached to you.

In this last session, we are finishing up the first chapter of 1 Peter. We have covered several topics ranging from who we are (children of God) to how we should act in times of trial to where we can find our joy during the valleys of life. Take a moment and reflect on what we have covered. What do you remember from previous sessions?

One of the ideas we talked about before was being obedient children. When we spoke of this, it was about leading holy lives and being obedient to God's instruction and leading. It was about not conforming to the things of our former selves. In the passage for today's session, we begin with obedience again.

Verse 22 says "Since you have in obedience to the truth." What is the "truth" Peter is speaking of? What is the truth that purifies our soul? If you said the gospel, you were absolutely correct. The gospel, the saving work of Jesus Christ, is the only thing that can purify us. It is the only thing that can atone for our sins and make us white (pure) as snow (see Isaiah 1:18, 1 John 1:7-9, Hebrews 9:14). All of this was brought to us through an act of love.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Love is an important topic that is consistent throughout the entire bible. Let's look at some passages about love:

Leviticus 19:18 but you shall love your neighbor as yourself

Micah 7:18 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

1 John 4:7-11 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

This last verse has some great insight for the passage we are considering here in 1 Peter. It says because we were loved first by God, we should inherently love one another. This is contingent on one thing. Do we know God? Are we children of God? To know God is to know love. It was an act of love that saved us, and that love should flow through us.

First Peter 1:22-23 tells us that if we have accepted and trust in the work of the cross, we should have a fervent love for one another. Meriam-Webster defines fervent as exhibiting or marked by great intensity of feeling or to be zealous. This is the kind of love that saved us, and it is this kind of love that we should have for one another. How is this kind of love possible? How can we accomplish this?

It all has to do with being born again (which is why Peter brings this topic up again). We spoke about being born again a couple sessions ago. We determined that being born again was essentially putting off the old selfish self and putting on the new selfLESS self. If we become completely selfless, we are always thinking of others above ourselves and are capable of loving them no matter what. This is exactly the love that Jesus had when He went to the cross for you! This begs the question; how can we learn to love in this way? Peter has something to say about this too.

We are born of seed that is imperishable, the living and enduring word of God. What, or I should say rather say who is the word of God? The answer is Jesus.

John 1:1-3,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace a truth.

Jesus is the undying, imperishable, everlasting word that is our example and source of love. We can look at His Life as our example of how to love others. We must also continue to dive into the Bible (also the word) to learn more about who God is and how He showed love to the people of earth. We must remember that the things of the earth, flowers, grass, trees are fading but the Lord endures forever. The wisdom of earth will fade away and change, but the wisdom of God will stay the same and last forever. The gospel that was preached to you, the greatest example of love, is always true and will forever be true.

Application Questions

- Are you loving others zealously?
- Is there someone who you have struggled to love?
- Why did you or do you struggle to love them?
- Is it for selfish reasons?
- Examine your life. How can God work through you to show you how to love others even greater?
- Have you and are you living out John 15:13? Having you been laying down your life (physical life, desires, etc.) for others?
- Think of at least one way you can show selfLESS love to someone this week and act on it.

Final Remark

It took an innocent man's death for us to fully understand the love that God has for the people of earth. It is only through the Holy Spirit working in us that we can learn to love as Christ loved us that day he went to the cross on our behalf. We MUST be willing to love one another as Christ loved us. It can be and most often is difficult to selflessly love someone, but it is what God has asked of us. We must be obedient children of God and follow his commands. As the scripture passage said above, if we know God, we know love. If we know love, we are fully capable of loving others so long as we get ourselves out of the way.