

1Peter 11-01-14b

Let's resume our study in the first chapter of 1st Peter. Our second session tonight will be somewhat shorter since the first one was somewhat longer, so we resume here at verse 20. Having spoken of the price that was paid for us, the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

And you remember that the goal of the Lord Jesus in coming and dying for us is that he might present the church to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. And the idea is the qualification of the Passover lamb, of course, as it typified and anticipated the work of Jesus Christ. And the goal of our obedience is that it be without spot and without blemish.

A thing can be 99% good, but if it's got sometimes even just one flaw, they can have a really expensive diamond, but if it's got a flaw, it greatly reduces its value. You can have a near mint coin, an old Morgan silver dollar or something, but if it's got a deep gouge in one little part, that greatly reduces its value. It doesn't take its value away, but it reduces it.

And our goal is to work on the blemishes and the spots. The standard of perfection, the standard by which all other faith and obedience lives are measured is, of course, the Lord Jesus. He was completely holy, completely satisfactory in the eyes of the Father.

And so that's our goal. And it isn't that we expect to attain it, but that doesn't keep us from striving for it. Golfers work on the perfect swing, programmers try to write the perfect program.

We all try to do things as well as they can be done, and there isn't anything wrong with knowing that we may never get it perfect. We just want to play that perfect chess game, and no mistakes, or fewer mistakes than the other guy at least. But here, the stakes are much higher and more serious, because this is the currency of our very lives.

This is the time that God has allocated to us on this earth. We've never had it before. We're never going to have it again.

You only go around once in this life, as the beer commercial used to say. And so this is our chance. Now is the appointed hour, now is the day of salvation, today, while it is yet called today.

Do not harden your hearts. Remember the message of Hebrews. Well all of that is a part of Peter's message.

And you remember who Peter is, he's a practical guy. He didn't envision himself as the first pope, he didn't envision himself as a great starry eyed theologian. He is talking to people who are, some of them in kind of a bad way, they're scattered all around the Roman Empire, and he says, look, this is what you can be happy about, this is what you can rejoice in, this is what you've got

that is more precious than gold or silver.

And once again, the focus, and it doesn't matter if you're facing practical problems, if you're facing theological debate, if you're facing spiritual challenge, if you're facing internal demons, external temptations, the influence of the devil or the world or the flesh or whatever it might be, the answer is always the same. Look to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be delivered.

And not just in the salvation sense, I'm not going to the lake of fire. Every day, it's Jesus Christ. What is the distinctive of Christianity versus any other faith, religion, creed, or belief system? It's Jesus Christ.

He's unique. There is no other savior who is a redeemer. There is no other savior who is God and man.

There is no other means whereby not only can we be rescued from oblivion and given eternal life, but we can be enabled and empowered day by day. We can be delivered from the power of sin, from the machinations of evil, from the corruption of our own flesh. God gives us the power through Jesus Christ.

It is all through Christ. He is our righteousness, our peace, our sanctification. He is our election.

He is our inheritance. Through Him, we have sonship. Through Him, we have priesthood.

Through Him, we have eternal life. Everything we have is in Christ. There's nothing we have that doesn't come through Christ.

And again, that's where the Calvinists miss it. Their election in eternity past unto salvation is apart from Christ. How does that election come through Christ if you're being elected for salvation and you're not in Christ yet? Christ is elect when by faith we choose to avail ourselves of God's grace and be placed in union with Christ.

Now we share His election. Now look at what's coming up in the next verse here. Calvinists will tell you that if you're a believer, you were foreordained.

You were predestinated to salvation and then God gave you the irresistible grace to receive the limited atonement that gets applied to your account so that you can persevere. Who is it that's predestined? Who is it that's foreordained? It's not you and me. We're not foreordained anything.

In eternity past, we're in prospect all a bunch of godless sinners without hope in the world, enemies of God, enemies of Christ, enemies of everything holy, hopeless, helpless, and useless. We're not ordained or picked out for anything in that godless, sinful, corrupt state. The one thing that all of us have is the ability to choose.

I say all of us. Obviously, there are a few exceptions, but in the main, God has made provision for those who are exceptions, but in the main, we have free will. That free will isn't the ability to choose to be good.

It isn't the ability to choose to do good, but it is the ability to choose to be made good, to be made something by God's grace. Arminianism, Calvinists say, if you're not a Calvinist, you're an Arminian, and Arminius, especially when you push some of his thinking to its extreme, basically says, no, you can not only choose God, but you can choose to be good, even apart from saving grace or anything else. You can choose good or you can choose evil.

Well, no, you can't. Until you're in Christ, until you have His righteousness and enablement by the Holy Spirit, you really can't. Anything you think is good really isn't.

It's always going to be motivated and corrupted by the flesh and the devil and the world and everything else. Paul says, in me dwelleth no good thing apart from Christ. But it is Jesus Christ who is foreordained.

Everything we have comes in Him and through Him. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Elect in Him before the foundation of the world.

In Him, in Him, in Him. Calvinist brother, read the New Testament. It's always in Him.

This is why Jesus Christ is the way. Election is not the way, predestination is not the way, foreordination is not the way. Jesus Christ is the way.

No man comes to the Father but by Him. You don't come to the Father by election and incidentally get connected to Him. It's just so wrong-headed and backward, it gets my Master of Theology blood boiling.

Look at what it says here, just read the scriptures. Verse 20, He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and your hope are in God. Through Him, your faith and your hope are in God.

Everything is in Him and through Him and by Him. In Him we exist, in Him we live. If you're not in Him, you have nothing.

You're not elect, you're not about to be saved, you're hopeless, helpless and useless, unless and until you're in Him. Our faith and hope are in God and once again these themes keep reoccurring, faith, hope, and by Him, availing ourselves of the grace of God. Well, this brings us to verse 22, since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth.

Now, just guessing, if you're going to talk about purification of the soul, what purifies our soul? Is that something that happens at salvation, our soul is run through the filter and all of the bad stuff

is extracted, you can put a Brita filter on your faucet and harmful things get filtered out, just clear water is supposed to come out the other side. This literally says, your souls having been purified, and this is a perfect participle, your souls having been, you can almost in English add the word, already, your souls already having been purified by obedience to the truth with a view toward ace, into, unto, with a view toward Philadelphia, unhypocritical brotherly love, un-hypocritas. It says sincere, but it's not hypocritical.

What would a hypocritical love be? I love you because of how you make me feel. Barbra Streisand used to have that song. I love the way he makes me feel.

What a egocentric, pre-Copernican universe that person lives in. I love you because when I'm around you, I feel good. I don't love you for any intrinsic qualities you have or any character you've developed or any admirable traits.

I love you because it makes me feel good when you're around. All I care about is me feeling good. Unhypocritical love, unhypocritas.

If you look this up in Strong's, it says this term occurs in the Septuagint in a list of weapons with which God defends the righteous against the wicked. As a helmet, he puts on un-hypocritan crescent. Crescent is judgment, cressus.

Similarly, in Wisdom, it says of the hypostatized Word of God, hypostatic union, God in the flesh. That as a fierce warrior, it jumps down from heaven into the corruption of the earth. In both instances, un-hypocritas, used of God's saving eschatological work, denotes the unfeigned simplicity of that which is irrevocable and definitive.

It is not speaking from behind the mask. It's not appearing one way and really being something else. So, isn't it interesting that it says we purify our souls by means of obeying the truth.

It doesn't say purify your souls and then you will be obedient. We purify our souls by obedience, through the Spirit, with a view toward. It says in, in your New King James, but this is with a view toward.

The focus is obedience. Obedience purifies your soul and having purified your soul through, dia, this is kind of an agency preposition, through the agency of the Spirit, with a view toward un-hypocritical love of the brethren, love. With a view toward un-hypocritical Philadelphia, agape one another.

Your goal in loving each other is that it not be a hypocritical brotherhood. That your fellowship isn't tainted by self-interest and corrupted and defiled by the selfishness. How do you accomplish that? How do you have a view toward that actual Philadelphia and execute the command to love? It is by means of obeying the truth.

To obey the truth, you have to know the truth, hence emphasis on Bible class. Regular exposure

to the truth of the Word of God and meditation on it, on a daily basis enables us to be obedient. If we come to Bible class and we hear the truth, we see the truth, we understand the truth, we recognize it, we assent to it, we confirm it, we say amen, but we do not meditate on it and it isn't actively circulating, we are not enabled.

We are not going to have un-hypocritical Philadelphia. That's not really going to be our goal. Our goal is going to be some other epithumia that's left over from our old secular hand-and-down manner of life.

So the key is to focus on obeying the truth, which means we have to keep thinking about the truth and living in the light of that truth. That enables everything else. As you've heard me say many times, there's nothing worse than being told what you ought to be and not being given the means.

Be ye holy for I am holy. Okay, great, how do I do that? Get out there and be holy. I don't have to tell you how.

You know what you're supposed to do. Get out there and do it. Well, how? I was telling somebody about, oh I know, it was a lady I work with and her grandson has to make a choice.

He's in two extracurricular activities and he can only do one according to his mother. So he either has to choose marching band or choir. He doesn't have time to do both.

And she was asking me, which one do you think he ought to do? And I said, well, I don't know, but given a choice, if you want something for a life skill or something that's going to last longer, I would stick with the vocal side because you can do that a lot longer. It's pretty hard to always hook up with a band. This guy's a drummer, by the way.

He just bangs the drums. He's like a fourth or fifth grader and he's just a big bass drum thumper in the marching band. Well, with all respect to thumping the drum in a marching band, there's a limited career path for that.

Pretty much you can do that up to and through college and then what? You need to switch over and get a kit or something. Marine Corps. Yeah, Marine Corps.

Briefly and onward. Although if you have a college degree, you're probably not going to be thumping a drum in the band unless you really mess up. But in thinking about which would be better and you look at which has more of a future, you say, well, there are a lot of things you can say about vocal presentation.

If you sing with a small group, you learn to be in front of people. It's something you can do your whole life. It's got a longer shelf life, let's say.

I can't really remember now why I brought that up. I've marched myself one too many steps down the side road there. But with a view toward something, why do you make your decisions? You

have a view toward the future.

And we have to meditate on the Word of God with a view toward knowing what it does for us, thinking about it, having that knowledge on hand. And how that hooks up with drumming, I have no idea. But what the scripture says is having purified your souls by means of obedience of the truth with a view toward philo adelphos.

I love my brother. That's what I want to do. And I want to do that unhyprocritically.

I want to circulate in my spiritual family and not cause harm and pain. I want to treat them like my family. From the heart, love one another.

Agapesate. Agape is the active. This is love that is expressed in action.

Love one another intensely. Ectenos. From, this is ek, it says with, but it's ek.

From a cleansed heart. We talk about having a catharsis or a cathartic experience. It's a cleansing experience.

The Greeks used to go watch tragedies acted out on the stage, waiting for the big climax and the resolution afterward, and going through the vicarious experience of seeing the hero with his tragic flaw come undone and so on. They were hoping for catharsis. They thought this would be a soul-cleansing experience.

By purging out their emotions and their bad ideas in watching a drama, they thought this would leave them with a cleaner heart. Well, we know that that's of very limited value, although there may be some. But spiritually speaking, our hearts are cleansed by the washing of water, by the word.

This word that we obey, the word that we meditate on, cleanses our hearts. It purifies our souls. And really, dichotomous, trichotomous, I think that's kind of a side argument.

I don't really see the Bible counting how many invisible parts we have. And if it's not going to count them, I'm not going to. But I would suggest to you that verse 22 here seems to indicate a parallel between a purified soul and a cleansed heart.

I don't think there's a lot of semantic difference or distance between those two expressions. I don't think you could have an impure heart and yet have a cleansed soul. I'm not sure how that would work.

So your soul, having been purified by means of obedience to the truth, with a view toward this unhyprocritical love for the brethren, love one another intensely from your clean heart. He sandwiches that idea. Love one another.

This I say to you, that you have love one for another. We're told time and time again to love one another. Walk in love.

We love because he first loved us. Love, love, love. And we say, well, you know, I'm not sure I can just generate love on command.

Where does this love come from? How can I love the unlovely? How can I love when I'm getting a lot of negativity coming back in my direction and I don't feel like loving them? They don't look very lovely. Well, this is why Peter sandwiches this command front and back with, you're not going to be able to love if your soul is not clean. You're not going to be able to love if your heart is not pure.

How do you purify your heart? How do you cleanse your soul? With the washing of water by the word. It is obedience to the truth. It is meditating on the truth, living in the light of the truth, deciding that the truth is the way to go and prioritizing that.

This cleanses us. There is a supernatural power to transform our minds. Remember Romans 12, 1 and 2. Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

Be not conformed, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. When your mind is renewed, you can see what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. And in the doing of that, we are able, we are enabled, we are empowered.

Romans 5, 5. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Once again, He's the energy. He's not to depersonalize Him.

He is a person, but His presence gives us the electricity to make this system work. And to the extent that we reduce the amperage of His presence by resistance and by obfuscation and by unconfessed sin and whatever else gums up the works, to that extent, there's going to be problems. Cleansed heart.

Romans tells us about it. Hebrews tells us about it. Hebrews chapter 10.

Enter in before the throne of grace. Hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience. Bodies having been washed with pure water, we approach.

Having been born again. And anagenaomai. Genao means degenerate.

Ben put it in the passive, so to speak. And ana again means again. So born again.

Not of corruptible seed. We had corruptible silver and gold. Now we've got corruptible seed.

Peter is a very straightforward thinker. I'm not saying simple, but it's straightforward. He says, look, what do you want? Do you want the temporary and the corruptible, the fallible, the

unreliable? Or do you want that which is perfect and eternal and that never fails, that never corrupts? There's the thartos stuff, the thartos silver and gold, the thartos seed.

And there's the incorruptible. There's the inheritance that fades not away. Make your choice.

Do you want to live your life in an expendable throwaway, nothing to show for it fashion? Or do you want to have something to hang on to? Do you want it to mean something and represent something that is eternal and lasts? So having been born again, not from the corruptible side. We've been delivered from that. We've been born again out of the corruptible into the incorruptible.

Through, once again, the word of God, which lives and abides forever. If we are begotten again by the living and eternal word, we partake of that characteristic. We enter into that which is eternal, that which is incorruptible.

Af-thartu, the alpha privative. Put an A in front of the word, makes it the opposite. Hypocritical, un-hypocritas.

Thartos, corruptible. Af-thartos, incorruptible. Through the word of God, which lives and abides forever.

And it's a choice because all flesh is as grass. And the glory of man is like the flower of the grass. The grass withers, the flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

In the beginning was the word. The word was with God. The word was God.

The word became flesh and dwelt among us. Everything we have comes through Christ. When we are obedient to the word, we are obedient to Christ.

When we conform ourselves to the word, we are conformed to the image of Christ. When we reflect the word of God, we reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are one and the same.

They are indistinguishable. There is no difference. The word was with God and the word was God.

The word became flesh and dwelt among us. The word is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the incarnate word.

That's why it is such a great blessing and such a great privilege to be able to go to the word, to learn the truth of God's word and to live in its light. And it's that simple. This first chapter of 1 Peter is about the simplest presentation of how to live the Christian life that there is.

It just doesn't get any simpler. It doesn't get any more direct and straightforward. And that's what you would expect from the Apostle Peter.

What an admirable guy. Messed up. Saw that he messed up.

Fixed that problem by God's grace. The Lord said, if you love me, feed my sheep. He said, three bags full, and away he went.

And this is what he wrote. And it's clear. It's crystal clear.

Everything we need has been given to us. The operative enabling power is within us in the person and presence of the Holy Spirit. The factor that determines whether it happens or not is strictly our choice.

It's our opportunity. Well, this idea of referencing the Old Testament and the grass and the flower, of course, is going to tie into these Jewish believers' background. Peter is almost hinting that, you know, if you really want to talk about something that was handed down from the fathers, think about that Old Testament scripture.

The only good thing you got from your fathers was their custodianship of the Word of God. And that's where we'll pick up next time. But this is a good place for us to pause for reflection and close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the simplicity of the Gospel. Thank you for the directness and the effectiveness of its presentation in these pages. We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus as we have seen that everything we have is through him.

And we pray that in the light of what we have seen in this passage, that it will be impressed on our hearts in such a way that we'll remember it, that it will come to our minds at the times that we need it, that we will be aware of our status as your children and our opportunity to pursue that holiness that is a reflection of our family relationship with you and with the Lord Jesus. We pray for those who are not with us. We pray for our brothers and sisters all over the world who are too far away to assemble but are yet certainly a part of our fellowship in our hearts and in our prayers.

And we ask your blessing on them as well as on the days that we spend with one another this weekend. We ask and pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.