

# 1 Peter 1:13–25

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Date: 26 July 2020

Preacher: John Angus Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's read the Word of God now from 1 Peter in chapter 1. We'll read from verse 13 to the end of the chapter.

Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.

And if you call on him as Father, who judges him partially 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.

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 : 27 ] 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 as grass, and all its glory like the flower of the 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. May the Lord bless our reading of his own word to us.

Let's just say a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we bless you for your word, and for the opportunity to share it, and to gather round it, to be challenged by it, and to be warmed by it.

We know, Lord, that you gave this word as a light in the darkness, and without it, Lord, we would be much the poorer. We would not be able to cope. Sometimes we little realise just how much we owe to the existence of the scriptures.

[ 2 : 46 ] Lord, we thank you, and we would pray that you would be with us by the power and the presence of your Holy Spirit as we seek to understand this word, be our leader, be our guide.

Grant that we would not be the same, having read and heard and pondered your word. Grant that we would be changed. We ask it in the name of Jesus.

Amen. Well, it's good once again to be able to speak to the folks in New Milnes. It's been quite a while since I've been there now, and I've missed that.

You're always a lovely congregation to preach to, and a congregation that I felt, young and old, were so interested in the word of God. Good leadership, good praying people, and a people who loved the Lord and longed to see his word touch the community.

And it's great that Benjamin is there now and ministering the word of God, and I pray that the Lord will bless his family and himself in all that they do there.

[ 3 : 53 ] Let's turn now to 1 Peter and chapter 1. The verses that I will focus on most, I suppose, will be verses 22 following.

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.

To come to this particular section, though, I want us to ask five questions. Five questions. In some ways, you'll find that these questions will summarise part of chapter 1, the earlier part, right through to the section that we're looking at.

Five questions, I suppose they are addressed to Christians, but they're also addressed to everybody. And if you are one of those people who may not yet have committed your life to Christ, I want you to think, I want you to ponder, what is it that's true about these Christians? And that could also be true of me if I commit my life to the Lord. After all, every single Christian you know became a Christian.

[ 5 : 15 ] It's something that happened in their lives. And it's the grace of God that touched them. And that same grace can touch you.

So let's look at these five questions. Addressed to Christians, but listen in. First of all, Christians, do you know what you have in common with other Christians?

You think of every Christian that you know, genuine Christian, what is it that you have in common with other Christians? Well, you notice the way 1 Peter opens there.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion. And then he names a number of places where they've been exiled to, as it were.

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. And that tells you that the Lord's people, they are a group. They are the elect.

[ 6 : 16 ] They're one group, one community. But they're also scattered. They're not together. They're apart. They're all over the world, perhaps.

In our age of lockdown, we can understand this kind of separation and this unity at the same time. Even though lockdown has come, and even though it's maybe being eased at the moment, we still feel a sense of separation, a sense of being scattered from one another.

And yet, we also know that we're together. And that there's a real community, a real unity, that cannot be broken. And what is it that's true of all these Christians, who are at fellowship, even though they are scattered?

They've all experienced God's foreordination. They've all experienced His spirit sanctification. And they've all experienced obedience to Jesus Christ, sprinkling by His blood.

They've all suffered. And they all know something of the love of Christ. Let's open these up very quickly. Because in many ways, it's a summary of chapter 1.

[ 7 : 30 ] You are elect exiles according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. God chose you before you were made, before the universe was made.

Every Christian has been foreordained by God. Secondly, the Spirit sanctified you. You were elect according to the sanctification of the Spirit.

You were set apart by the Spirit for the God who chose you. And that's quite remarkable. He does a work in us that puts us in God's circle.

Then you were elected for obedience to Jesus Christ. Every Christian comes to the point where they obey Christ. We'll come back to that.

And then they are sprinkled with His blood. Surely, this is what identifies Christians. They have been sprinkled by His death, His blood.

[ 8 : 29 ] His death, His blood means so much to them. Without it, they cannot be purified. They cannot be changed. They cannot be made right with God. Now, every Christian has experienced all of these.

In verses 3 onwards, we read that these Christians are suffering. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.

They are suffering. Various trials, all sorts of trials. And I suppose that is true in the first century, but it's also true in every century. Christians suffer.

And I have not yet met a Christian who hasn't suffered. Some Christians have suffered more than others, considerably more than others.

But I have never yet met a Christian who hasn't known any suffering. Suffering seems to be what the Lord God and the Spirit of God use in order to shape us and mould us and lead us to depend upon Him.

[ 9 : 38 ] Every Christian in that sense has a wilderness experience. We're always in a place where we need to depend upon God.

And yet, even in the suffering, what happens? We love Christ. We love God and Christ. Isn't that remarkable?

In verse 8, though you have not seen Him, you love Him. We've never seen Jesus Christ. We've never set eyes on Him physically.

I've been thinking a lot at the moment about meditating upon Jesus and just taking time to think about Jesus. Also to think about God, to think about the Spirit, to think about Heaven. But thinking about Jesus, where He is right now, He's in Heaven. He is a human body. He is there in a place.

[10:38] And as you ponder Jesus Christ, you realise this is amazing. This is all so real. If you don't take time to ponder Jesus and the reality of Jesus, don't be amazed that your faith grows cold, that you begin to feel distant from the Lord, and that you begin to feel hollow in all your confession as a Christian.

See, the Christian, if he has been indeed brought to Jesus and sprinkled by His blood, even in the midst of suffering, they come to realise, I can't give up.

Why? Because I love Him. Isn't that amazing? We love Him, though we haven't yet seen Him. We love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

right now you are rejoicing in Jesus Christ, even though you don't see Him. So every Christian has experienced all of these things in a sense they're in fellowship, even though they may be apart.

They've experienced God's foreordination, the Spirit's sanctification, obedience to Christ, sprinkling by His blood, and even though they suffer, they strangely, marvellously love Him.

[12:14] And what is said in verses 10 to 12 here in chapter 1 is that the prophets of the Old Testament spoke about the kind of experiences that you and I are enjoying.

They spoke about a people of God who would be brought in from the nations and brought around this amazing servant Jesus Christ, brought back to God through Him.

The prophets spoke about these things. They didn't know when it was going to happen. They didn't know when this great age of revival and restoration would be. They weren't sure.

But now they are sure. And you can be sure that in heaven they are aware of what they prophesied and how it's being fulfilled.

The prophets are interested in you because you are experiencing the fulfillment of what they promised. Go to the prophets.

[13:22] In many ways you are reading your life story when you read what they promise. More than that, the angels are actually interested in believers.

Isn't it strange? The angels themselves. In verse 12 it was revealed to the prophets that they were serving not themselves but you in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

Things which angels long look they look down they bend down they want to see what's going on in your life.

They're amazed at the way in which the prophets and the promises are fulfilled in the way the church is being gathered from the nations built up and brought to be like Christ.

the angels look at these things they're amazed at what the gospel has achieved throughout the world.

[14:31] So what I'm saying is you have this in common with every Christian. The prophets are interested in them all and the angels can't keep their eyes off you.

They're amazed. So you have that in common with all Christians. The second thing do you realise that you are all defined by obedience?

Obedience. We mentioned it earlier in 1.2 obedience to Christ. See you cannot be a Christian without being obedient to Christ.

You can't be heading the other way. You can't be running from him and confessing him at the same time. Becoming a Christian means yielding obeying and trusting yourself to Christ.

You stop trusting yourself and you start trusting him. You obey him. He is offered to you. He offers himself to you knowing full well what you are and when you become a Christian you say yes.

[15:49] You obey. You come. You trust. You yield. You lean. You believe. Obedience to Christ.

In 1.14 it's not just obedience to Christ. You are obedient children. You notice that? As obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

See we are no children. We are obedient to Christ and then we become obedient to a father. We are his children and every Christian is a child of the same father.

So whenever you're looking at another Christian writing to another Christian texting them emailing them praying for them always remember their father is your father your father is their father.

You are so related to the same father and you have to be obedient to that father. That's what you are. You see Christian sin that's the reality but you know that's not the default position for the Christian.

[17:08] The default position for the Christian is that they are obedient obedient to the father. That's what they are obedient children.

In 122 you find another emphasis on obedience not this time obedience to Christ or obedience to the father but having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth. see the truth is what we come into contact with. Yes we come into contact with Christ and his blood. Yes we come into contact with the father the holy father in heaven. But really what we come into contact with that brings us to Christ and that brings us to the father is the truth. truth. We have become obedient to the truth. It's the truth that we hear in our ears that we respond to. The truth that we read with our eyes in the scriptures that's what we respond to.

[18:16] We become obedient to the truth. So if you've heard the truth and you're not yet a Christian isn't it time that you believed that truth and committed yourself to him.

Because you cannot be a Christian. You cannot obey Christ. You cannot become an obedient child of your heavenly father without obeying the truth.

And that truth as we shall see comes to you in various ways. The truth the truth about Christ the truth about the lamb the truth about the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

The truth about the father who is holy who needs to have you sprinkled before you can be in fellowship with him. The truth that he actually doesn't desire that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

That's the truth. What are you doing with the truth? Well you see all Christians are defined by that truth. So you have many things in common with all Christians and now you realise that all Christians are defined by obedience.

[19:40] The third thing have you understood as Christians that you have already been purified? You have already been purified.

This is what we have in verse 22 there. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

Having purified your souls. Isn't that remarkable? You have purified your souls.

Who did this? us? Well, in this particular context, it's not so much God that purified us. We purified our souls.

How did we purify our souls? Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth. You see, when we came into contact with the truth and it began to mean something to us and it began to stay in our hearts and our mind and in our conscience when it was addressed to our soul and we knew it was true, once we obeyed that truth, do you know what happened?

[21:00] We purified ourselves. We are no longer defiled, no longer unclean, we are forever different, we are forever different.

In fact, the word that is used here, the tense that is used, it's something that happened and it just continues to have consequences. Once you obeyed the truth, you were purified and you continued to be purified.

See, that's the thing about the Christian. He can't unpurify himself. he can't go back to what he was. The true Christian cannot do that. And when you and I sin as Christians, we feel awful, we feel it's not right. And it isn't right, because you are pure, you've been set apart for God, you've allied yourself to the truth.

of course you could never have done it by yourself. The Spirit of God had to be involved in this amazing purification, cleaning you, setting you apart.

[22:19] Of course the Word of God would also be involved in that. The Spirit would use the truth to do it. But you were involved. You are the one who obeyed.

you are the one who purified your soul by obedience to the truth. There's no point, no point at all in blaming God and saying, God hasn't done it in me.

You can't do that. That's not right. God invites you. Christ invites you. You have gospel after gospel, promise after promise.

you've got story after story. You've had so much contact with Christians down through the years of your life. Don't tell me that you don't know the gospel, you don't know the truth, that you don't understand the gospel invitation.

The question is, are you going to respond to that? Will you obey it? and if you obey it, you will be purified.

[ 23 : 32 ] You don't wait till you're purified and then obey it. You don't try to clean yourself up and then become a Christian.

No, it's one of the most amazing things. You actually become purified as you believe the truth. I remember the morning after I became a Christian.

The world looked different. The world looked clean. I could see creation with new colours. I could see history in the past, the present and the future.

Everything looked so different. It's as if I was seeing things with new eyes. A purification even in the way I was seeing things.

But then in the way that I felt on the inside, I knew that I wanted to call God Father because that's where I belonged. My soul on the inside was purified.

[ 24 : 42 ] That's where it begins. It begins there and then it comes out into the public life. But it begins on the inside.

So three things we've asked so far. Do you know what you have in common with other Christians?

Do you realize that you are all defined by obedience?

And have you understood that you are all already purified? The fourth question, do you know Christians that you are called to love as never before?

This is the purpose. This is the purpose. You see, this is the goal. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

What a lot is in that one verse. Love is the goal. See, you become purified and you begin loving.

[ 26 : 00 ] See, that's an amazing thing. Once you're obedient, once you're purified, you begin loving. You begin to be interested in other people in a different way.

You begin to take note of them, people that you may have ignored before, you can't any longer ignore. Maybe indeed it will be those outside who are not Christians and you feel for them with new feelings and you yearn to see them purified and brought into Christ and salvation and you weep because that's not happened to them.

Family members, you may have a sister or a brother or a father or a mother and they're not in Christ and you are and you want to see them there.

Why? You've begun to love. You've begun to look outside of yourself. You're not number one anymore. But here it's not just that it's love for those on the outside.

The focus here is on brotherly love. It's love for the community. Love for the community. Love for the believing brothers and sisters.

[ 27 : 23 ] It's true. When you become a Christian you begin to realise just how much you have in common with other believing men and women, boys and girls.

And it's beautiful. It's brilliant. When you begin to have fellowship for the first time with Christians, I remember as I said earlier when I became a Christian beginning to think of my mother as my sister in Christ.

I remember a cousin of mine who I was preaching in Paisley and he came along and the Lord wonderfully changed him and he says before we were cousins, now we are brothers.

And that's what happens. You begin to love as brothers. You're looking outward not just inward. But notice what is said here.

It's sincere love. Sincere. You've purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love.

[ 28 : 33 ] It's not play acting. It's not putting on a show. This is unhyphocritical action. Aimed at brothers and sisters.

And it's real. You don't put it on. Love is sincere. They've experienced the same experiences as you have at least to some degree.

You don't approach them with suspicion. You are approaching them as those who are fellow sharers, fellow exiles, believers, fellow believers, fellow travelers, fellow lovers.

That's what they are. They are in the one family and your love for them is sincere. You don't put on a mask. You don't put on a show when you meet them.

You genuinely, sincerely love them. love. And notice that this love is commanded. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another.

[ 29 : 50 ] Brotherly love. Love there is a noun. The adjective brotherly love. This second word love is a verb.

It's in the imperative. it's a command. Love one another earnestly. Just think about that. You can be commanded to love.

You can't change your feelings. There may be some people that you will have greater affection for, greater feelings towards. That will be the case.

We're not talking about love though in terms of feelings. We're talking about acting in love. love can be commanded.

It's often very practical, sometimes very public, sometimes very private. Sometimes it will be really easy to love practically.

[ 30 : 48 ] Other times it will be quite a sacrifice. There will be much that you will have to give up on your part so that you can love your brothers and sisters sincerely.

There will be sacrifice. There will be activity. There will be practical activity. There will be public and private sides to this love that we are commanded to engage in.

but we have to do it. Why? Because you have been purified. You have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love.

You have been purified so that you can love. And notice this love is for one another.

Love one another. It's not selective. It's reciprocal. You love and this is very important now.

[ 31 : 58 ] You love and you've got to be open to being loved. There's something about the sinful human nature that actually finds that hard.

Sometimes pride can be so sinfully shaped that we can even love sinfully.

And we don't want to be loved. We want to be in control. We don't feel we need others but we want others to need us. We want others to need our love.

And you know they do need your love. They need one another's love. but you also need their love. In fact when you became a Christian you were baptized into the church, into the body of Jesus Christ.

Why? Because you can't cope without it. You need their gifts in order to progress as a Christian.

You need their love, their practical love in order to survive in this world.

[ 33 : 16 ] Love one another. Be open to loving. Be open to being loved. And it's from a pure heart.

A pure heart. I think it was Luther that used to speak about people using people. Christians don't use or shouldn't use other Christians.

They're not using them to achieve their own ends. Rather, we are fellow travelers and we should be helping Christians, encouraging Christians every day lest they get a deceitful hardened heart.

We want to help them on their journey and we're doing it from a pure heart. We genuinely want the best for them. And notice it's earnest, it's constant.

Love one another earnestly. Don't be content with minimal actions of love. Where is the earnestness?

[ 34 : 33 ] Where is the constancy? Where is the willingness to give not 5% but 95%?

You see, when you are called to love earnestly and constantly, literally the word seems to be like with every muscle strained.

You're not just holding something ever so lightly, hardly touched by it. You're putting everything into it just so that these people can be helped.

Love one another earnestly. So do you see, Christians, you have been called to love us you have never loved before?

And then finally, Christians, have you grasped why you are able to love and why you are able to be loved?

[ 35 : 40 ] How is it that you have been able to love and be loved? love? Where does this motivation come from? Everyone needs to be motivated because love is something that has to come from the inside out.

We've noticed we've been purified, we've purified our souls for obedience and the evidence of that obedience is in love. But just step back and ask why is it that I want to love?

Well, several things here quickly. The first thing is you've been set free. You have been set free.

You see there in verse 18, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your father.

You've been set free. You had a futile way of life before. Now you've been set free. You are shaped by something different.

You are not the person that you once were. You've been ransomed. Somebody paid the price to set you free. And now that you're set free, you live a different way of life.

[ 37 : 04 ] You had one way of life before. Now the blood of Christ, the precious blood of Christ, has set you free to live another life, another way of living, another way of loving.

You've been set free by the blood of Christ, and that means you are able to love and be loved.

Secondly, you have been born again of God.

You have been born again of God. You notice it says here in verse 23, he's talking about loving one another earnestly from a pure heart.

Why? Since you have been born again. You have been born again of God. You couldn't bring about that new birth.

you could obey, and you must obey, but only God can make you to be born again. He changes you from the inside out.

[ 38 : 16 ] He changes you in a lasting way, and when he changes you, it's as if the seed within you is imperishable.

It just keeps on going. You're changed from the inside out. You're born of imperishable seed. That's why you're able to love, live differently.

That's why you're able to be open to being loved in humility. It's because you've been reshaped from the inside. You've been born again of imperishable seed.

No one less than God himself has come to live within you. He's there on the inside. He's absolutely there, and he is, by definition, imperishable, and the seed is imperishable, and you are born of him.

The third reason that you are able to love and be loved is that you've been born again through the living word of God. You notice what it says here.

[ 39 : 34 ] Love, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. You see, God is the reason that you are born again, but he uses the word of God.

He uses the truth that he has revealed, that you have heard, that you have believed, and that word changes you.

That word is living, and it's abiding, it's constant, it doesn't go away, it doesn't change in its potency, it's as powerful today as when you first believed it, and it's really important that we grasp that, the word of God has not changed.

I don't know how long you've been a Christian, you may have been a Christian for decades, but reality is that the word of God is as powerful today as it was on the day you first became a Christian, and you've been born again through that word, that living and abiding word of God.

It's a strange thing, there's so much news, so much word out in the world these days, whether it's on our screens, on our TVs, or whatever, a lot of that word has the capacity to affect us, undoubtedly.

[ 41 : 18 ] we can be brought to weep with tears when we are presented with certain truths, but nothing, nothing compares with the effect of the word of God, because the word of God, you see, includes both demands and promises, promises.

And the thing is that when we believe the word, the truth, we are saying, yes, I accept, O God, all your demands, and yes, I believe all your promises.

And it's that combination of demand and promise, that living and abiding word of God, with all its demands divinely given, and all its promises divinely provided.

It's that living, abiding word of God that changes us. What does, what effect does that have?

Well, imagine you're in a situation and you think, right, I was able to cope up till yesterday, but today I'm in a new situation.

[ 42 : 55 ] I'm not sure I can manage this. Maybe I've lost a loved one. Maybe my family is not in a spiritually good place.

maybe they've thrifted. Maybe I've received a bad diagnosis about my own health. Maybe I've lost my job. Maybe I'm struggling with mental health issues.

Maybe I'm finding it very hard to bear with the burdens within the church and in the world outside. You're in that situation and you feel vulnerable and you think how can I cope?

Well, you see, the reality is in that situation the living and abiding word of God is what you need to hold on to.

God's demands and God's promises haven't changed. He will give you everything you need to get through this day.

[ 44 : 08 ] Whatever temptation you are facing, He will show you the way to escape or to bear with that. He will never, ever leave you on your own.

That's why you can love to incredible lengths. That's why you can be open to being loved in a way that tests your humility. So, when you think about the limits and you say, well, I can do this and I can do that, but I really can't go that far.

Remember, you mustn't measure, you mustn't measure what you're able to do simply by your own strength.

You've got to take into account God living within you, the word of God and all his demands and promises, strengthening you by the power of God's Spirit.

You are born again. you are able to do so much. You won't feel it.

[ 45 : 27 ] You will feel at times your weakness and that's okay. God is a strange way actually of helping us through things, giving us power, strengthening us, and at the same time we feel like a wet rag in our weakness, frailness.

God's strength is always made perfect while our weakness continues to be just that, weakness. So we've looked at these five questions addressed to Christians hoping that others are listening in. do you know what you have in common with other Christians?

Do you realize that you are all defined by obedience? Have you understood that you have already been purified? Do you know that you are called to love as never before?

And have you grasped why you can love and be loved? It's because you've been set free to live a new life you've been born of the God who dwells in you and his word in its demands and promises shape your life and your heart.

[ 46 : 56 ] May the Lord bless his word. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we ask that what we have read of your word and that beautiful truth, that amazing section of 1 Peter, that it would, Lord, be a reminder to us of what we are.

How often we need that. How often, Lord, we need just to be brought back to basics because we forget these things. It's as if the world and Satan himself put all the effort in to keep our minds off the basics.

Lord, thank you for your word, for the truth, and that we have it in our own language to read and ponder, and that we have biblical communities where we can gather to share, even if it's online.

Lord, you, your Holy Spirit is able to work, and no lockdown can prevent you working. You can continue to make us holy, shaping us, enabling us to love and be loved, nothing can stop you working, Lord, whether we're exiled across the world or gathered in the courts of heaven.

Lord, you are able to be at work within us. We thank you, Lord, for the thought of those that have gone home to heaven, and for the way in which they still love and are being loved, and they're able to do it with hearts that were purified on earth and are now sinless in heaven.

[ 48 : 44 ] Keep us, Lord, we would pray, with our eyes looking forward and our minds looking backward to the cross of Christ, knowing that you are the one who dwells in the present.

Take us away from our own sinful distractions and help us to focus on you. This we ask in the name of Jesus, at your right hand.

Amen.