

Growing

Harmony M.B.C., May 29, 2016

1Peter 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

1Peter 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1Peter 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

1Peter 1:21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

1Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*:

1Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1Peter 1:24 For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

1Peter 1:25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

I present these verses because they lay the ground work for what this message will be about. Here, the Apostle Peter outlines the effects of the blood of Christ (and the word of God that surrounds the message of the gospel) on believers. That is, they are born again eternally, and are led to obey the truth of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit. So, while all other things that might advertise the glory of man wither and die, the work of the word of God in the gospel produces the incorruptible newborn creature. With this written, Peter is ready to move on to other things regarding this new life in Christ. That is where our message today starts. So let's begin to look at Chapter 2, and may the Holy Spirit of God enlighten the spiritual eyes of every one of us to the great truths he writes about in these verses.

I. 1Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

- Our rebirth gives us the plain spiritual sense to inventory our base human traits and recognize that they are unspiritual and unproductive
- This honest appraisal should challenge and empower us to lay those things aside:
 - ◆ Malice – desire to inflict injury on someone out of a hostile impulse or because of a meanness of spirit
 - ◆ Guile: insidious cunning in attaining a goal; crafty or artful deception; duplicity.
 - (duplicity: deceitfulness in speech or conduct, as by speaking or acting in two different ways to different people concerning the same matter; double-dealing)
 - ◆ Hypocrisies: a pretense of having a virtuous character, moral or religious beliefs or principles, etc., that one does not really possess.
 - ◆ Envy: feelings of discontent or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc.
 - ◆ Evil speakings: saying things that are not of a godly nature.

II. 1Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

- Verses One and Two, connected together, strongly suggest that if we will not kill off our baser behavior there will not be any desiring of the sincere milk of the word.

- ◆ Here's why: If we cultivate any of those traits in that list of depraved human habits, they are all representative of insincerity about spiritual things.
- ◆ Their very presence in our thinking and acting pattern will crowd out the interest and ability to get something from the word of God.
 - This past week I was having to take online training on a topic that was based primarily on theory. I had to study a section of the training and then answer some test questions on it. My wife was trying to do her morning chores and so she was moving around in the study and from room to room and for some reason my mind could barely focus on that training program, but rather I was distracted by the smallest thing she did that made sound. Looking back at that experience, I realize it is a perfect illustration of what I am talking about here. When, like my distraction at my wife's business of the day, we are distracted from our spiritual pursuit by the depraved behavior involving malice, guile, etc. moving about in our minds, we cannot focus on the spiritual things related to the word of God.
- But there's a good lesson taught here about the capacity of born again believers. Verse Two introduces the idea of a new start for believers and of a new ability they are capable of: The very fact of being one who is reborn by the power of God makes us receptive to spiritual instruction: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Why do I say this statement indicates a receptiveness to spiritual instruction? Let me illustrate:
 - ◆ Would any of you tell a young calf, "Now I want you to eat this fried chicken; I want you to like this meat."
 - ◆ No, you wouldn't because calves drink milk and when they are big enough to eat something solid, they are grass eaters. But here, the Holy Spirit is saying to certain people who during their entire life up until their new birth, were sin eaters, "I want you to have a desire for the milk of the word." Before this time, they had no appetite for spiritual food, and were not able to consume it. But now, the Holy Spirit assumes correctly that they can have an appetite for that spiritual food. This is definitive! (of the capability and disposition of new creatures in Christ).
- But, I want you to notice that there is also a caution and a formula for spiritual success in these first two verses. Let's look at that caution and formula by putting together two sections of Peter's statement: "Wherefore **laying aside**...**desire** the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby."
- We should now be able to see a two-part caution and a two part formula for spiritual success:
- The caution is seen in the warnings to "lay aside" some things and to "desire" something else.
 - ◆ These are also part of the formula for success: when we lay aside the carnal tendencies and we are able to discover an interest in the word of God, it will give us a path to grow spiritually as a result ("that ye may grow thereby").
 - Have you ever noticed that many of the big expensive safes and bank vaults have at least a two-part formula for how to get them open. Someone spins a dial to click in the combination and then somebody has to insert a key and turn the lock. It takes both actions to gain entry.
 - ◆ Do you notice that the Holy Spirit uses the word "may?" Do we remember our grammar enough that we know "may" means permission (not ability). Does this mean that if we do not follow the formula, we do not have permission to grow spiritually? (Hint: I believe that not only does God give us permission to grow spiritually when we follow the formula, but we **give ourselves permission** to grow spiritually).

III. 1Peter 2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

- Now, this verse presents a challenge to each of us. If this statement is true for us, then spiritual growth is possible. If this is not true of us, there will be no spiritual growth.
 - ◆ How many of you know what the salty taste of salt is like? (Answer shows that the taste of salt is universally known by humans).

- ◆ Now, how many of you know what grasshoppers taste like? (Answer shows that not everybody has tasted of grasshoppers).
- ◆ Big question: Have you experienced through the spiritual power of the new birth to be able to say that you know the Lord is gracious?

IV. 1Peter 2:4 To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious,

- This verse describes the route by which we learned that the Lord is gracious.
 - ◆ You came to Christ as the Savior if you have experienced that the Lord is gracious
 - ◆ Jesus Christ is a living Savior to you if you have experienced that the Lord is gracious
 - ◆ You are at least somewhat aware that lost humanity has not acknowledged that Jesus Christ is the living example of the graciousness of the Lord, if you have experienced that the Lord is gracious
 - ◆ You are at least somewhat informed that Jesus Christ is the chosen One of God to reveal the graciousness of the Lord, if you have experienced that the Lord is gracious

V. 1Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

- We are all living stones as born again believers and this relationship is a kind of consolidation by the Lord
- The Lord's church is a spiritual house made up of these living stones – each of us as a stone in the building of God have a niche that was planned and filled by the Lord as it has pleased him: **1Cor. 12:18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.
 - ◆ Scripture speaks of us being built together in Christ as the Lord's church: **Eph. 2:21-22** In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.
- In the Lord's church we operate as a holy priesthood for the purpose of presenting to the Lord what are called "spiritual sacrifices."
 - ◆ Do we understand what these **spiritual sacrifices** are that we are to offer up?
 - **Consecrating yourself: Romans 12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your **bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.
 - **Giving to the cause of Christ: Philippians 4:18** But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the **things which were sent from you**, an odour of a sweet smell, a **sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God**.
 - **Praise and thanksgiving: Hebrews 13:15** By him therefore let us offer the **sacrifice of praise** to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.
 - **Good works and sharing: Hebrews 13:16** But to **do good and to communicate** forget not: for with such **sacrifices** God is well pleased.
- Our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God by way of Jesus Christ our great High Priest.