Holy Living and Fervent Love – 1 Peter 1

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1-2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: grace to you and peace be multiplied.

3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance [b]incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6-9 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been [c]grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls.

10-12 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to [e]us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

13-15 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

17-21 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with [g]corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 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 hope are in God.

22-25 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

Background, 1 Peter was written in Rome ‘Babylon’ around 62-64AD after Paul was released.

Peter writes from the heart of the Roman Empire right as Nero's hostility is heating up. That is why in 1 Peter 1:6 he immediately prepares believers for "various trials" and reminds them that their true citizenship and inheritance are secure in heaven (1:4), even if they are treated as "elect exiles" (1:1).

Rather than telling believers to fight back aggressively or retreat completely from society, Peter instructs them to live lives so visibly good and honorable that critics have nothing valid to accuse them of.

1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

Peter addresses believers as *parepidēmois* (sojourners or temporary residents) living across five Roman provinces in modern-day Turkey. This immediately reminds Christians that their true citizenship belongs to a heavenly kingdom rather than their surrounding pagan culture. Notice he says “pilgrims of the Dispersion” – we are just passing through!

- **Hebrews 11:13**: *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*
- **Philippians 3:20**: *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."*

Historically, "the Dispersion" referred to the Jews scattered outside their homeland of Judea following Assyrian, Babylonian, and later Roman conquests. By capitalizing it, translators remind readers that Peter is intentionally applying a classic Old Testament/Jewish title to followers of Jesu much like we captialize "the Church" or "Israel"

2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

- ***Elect according to the foreknowledge***: Peter first described his intended readers as *elect*. God’s choosing is not random or uninformed, but according to His foreknowledge, which is an aspect of His omniscience.
- Salvation is presented as a unified effort of the Godhead. The Father foreknew them, the Spirit sets them apart (*hagiasmos*), and Jesus's blood seals their obedience and cleansing.
- since we fall short of perfect sanctification & obedience, there is cleansing from sin provided for us.

Vs 3-4 Has begotten us again…The wording of *begotten us again* is different from *born again* (John 3:3) but the meaning is the same (see also vs23).

- We are born again to a living hope because we have eternal life in a Savior who has conquered death Himself. The hope lives because it is set upon an inheritance incorruptible that can never fade away because it is reserved in heaven. This is a significant contrast to any inheritance on this earth.

Vs 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith

- The promise of our inheritance is certain because we are kept by the power of God. This enables us to endure through faith until the coming of Jesus. The word "kept" (*phrouroumenous*) is a military term meaning guarded by a garrison. God protects both the inheritance in heaven and the believer on earth until the final day.

Vs 6 you are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

- Sometimes it is thought that a strong Christian will never be grieved in a trial. The idea is that a Christian should be like Superman or the emotionless Spock. Yet Peter here tells us that there is a "need be" not only for the various trials, but more especially that there is a "are in" for being grieved itself. God has a purpose not only for the trial but also for the heavy grief we feel in the trial.
- If we are to be happy all the time, why do we have the Book of Psalms?

Vs 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

- Our faith isn't tested because God doesn't know how much or what kind of faith we have. It is tested because *we* often are ignorant of how much or what kind of faith we have. God's purpose in testing is to display the enduring quality of our faith as He sees our faith more precious than gold.

Vs 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

- Peter knew that though he had seen Jesus (both before and after the resurrection) most every Christian in the early church had not seen Jesus, nevertheless, they loved Him. Jesus was no less real because they had not seen Him.
- The word translated "**joy unspeakable/inexpressible**" "occurs only here in the New Testament and describes a joy so profound as to be beyond the power of words to express." (Grudem).

Vs 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

- The end result (*telos*) of enduring faith is the complete salvation and deliverance of the soul.

Vs 10-12 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

- **Verse 10 (Prophets Searched Carefully).** Old Testament prophets wrote about God's grace without knowing the exact timing of Messiah's coming. They diligently studied their own writings to understand when these events would unfold.
- **Verse 11 (Suffering Before Glory).** The Spirit of Christ within the prophets pointed to a specific pattern. The Messiah had to endure suffering first before entering into His glory, establishing the same pattern for His followers.
- **Verse 12 (Angels Long to Look).** Prophets served future generations rather than themselves. The gospel message preached by the apostles is so remarkable that even angels stoop down (*parakypsai*) to examine it closely.

Vs 13-16 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, "**Be you holy; for I am holy**".

- Because of this great salvation, believers must prepare their minds for action and stay spiritually sober. placing your complete, undivided confidence on the favour currently being brought toward you rather than passively wishing for a distant future reward. In Greek, *elpizō* means a confident, rock-solid expectation based on certainty and from that e*lpisate* is used here to set your hope.

- The Greek word translated as "holy" is *hagios* (ἅγιος), which fundamentally infers being set apart, different, or dedicated for a specific purpose rather than just following religious rules or achieving moral perfection. The main idea behind *holiness* is not moral purity but it is the idea of "*apartness*." The idea is that God is *separate*, different from His creation, both in His essential nature and in the perfection of His attributes. God calls us to come to Him and share His apartness.

Vs 17 And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

- If we as Christians call on a holy God, we must understand that we call on a God who shows no partiality and will so judge our conduct. This makes a working, sober, holy walk all the more important.

Vs 18 Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things:

- The high call for godly living makes sense in light of the price that was paid for our redemption. The precious blood of Jesus did not save us so that we could then live as if we were garbage.

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

- 2 Corinthians 5:21, *made him to be sin for us* - the Greek connection is to a sin offering.
- **The Case for "Sin" (Imputation).** Most English translations keep the word "sin" to preserve Paul's sharp poetic contrast. Just as Jesus did not personally commit sin yet was treated as sin on the cross, believers do not possess natural perfection yet become the "righteousness of God" in Him.

Vs 22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

- You do not earn purification by keeping a list of moral rules; rather, your soul is cleansed when you surrender in faith to God's truth. Notice how Peter keeps grace front and center by adding "through the Spirit", even the act of obeying the truth is empowered by the Holy Spirit rather than human willpower alone.

- Peter finishes the verse by urging them to love one another *"fervently"* (*ektenōs*). This Greek adverb pictures a muscle stretched to its absolute limit, showing that authentic Christian love requires intentional, wholehearted effort.

Vs 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever.

- Such love is only possible (and only to be expected) of those who have been born again by the eternal word of God. Again, Peter did not use the same wording for *born again* as in John 3; but he did use the exact same idea.
- *"God's Word never dies, God's Word never changes. There are some who think we ought to get a new gospel every few years or even every few weeks, but that was not Peter's notion. He wrote, and he was divinely inspired to write, concerning 'the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."* Spurgeon

Vs 24 All flesh is as grass…

- **Unshakable Security Under Pressure**. Peter was writing to "elect exiles" facing social rejection and growing Roman hostility. Everything around them: status, wealth, safety, and even Roman imperial power was temporary grass that would eventually wither.
- **Quoting Isaiah 40:6–8. In verses 24–25a**, Peter quotes Isaiah to contrast fading human glory (like grass and wildflowers) with the permanent "word of the Lord" (rhēma Kyriou), which endures forever.

Vs 23&25 "Through" & "Now" ***is the word:*** Some people try to draw a sharp distinction between the two Greek words most often translated word, which are the ancient Greek words *rhema* and *logos*. But here Peter used both words to refer to the exact same idea. The two words sometimes have subtle differences, but often not significant differences.

The Word of God is the same as Isaiah 40:8 says it is: *the word of the Lord which endures forever,*

- **The Living Seed** (Logos, v. 23). In verse 23, Peter says believers are born again by the incorruptible seed of the "word of God" (logos), referring to God's eternal truth and divine message as a whole.

- **The Spoken Message** (Rhēma, v. 25). When Peter quotes Isaiah and adds "this is the word" in verse 25, he uses *rhema* - a term that emphasizes the specific, *spoken* proclamation delivered out loud by preachers. Peter wants his readers to know that the spoken gospel message (euangelisthentes, "*good news announced*") carries the exact same eternal power and permanence as God's written Scripture.
- **A Permanent Anchor.** By emphasizing "*this is the word*", Peter assures them that the simple gospel message they trusted is the one thing in the universe that cannot fail, fade, or be destroyed. Because they were born again through this eternal Word (v. 23), their new spiritual life is just as permanent as the Word itself.

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- Be ready for persecution but don't react as you had in times past but be holy.
- Don't fight back! Be different, be other.
- The gospel is more than you are saved, it's how you conduct our lives,
- Because you call in Him, that should change your conduct with fear and reverence.
- Why fear and reverence? - knowing you were ransomed with the precious Blood of Christ.
- Don't live in such a way as the world would.
- Your faith must be beyond what you are enduring now.
- Life is painful, but don't focus on that - look forward to that great glory!
- Your hope in Christ is someone Who will never fade away.
- Hope is not your ticket to heaven but how we are to conduct our lives even when someone or something is making your life miserable.

So, in Conclusion:

When a culture turns hostile toward your faith, human nature gives you two bad options: *fight back* with the same anger and hostility you're receiving, *or retreat* into a bunker and hide until it's over.

Around AD 63, Peter is writing from the heart of the Roman Empire - a place he calls 'Babylon' - right as Emperor Nero's hostility against Christians is heating up. He writes to believers scattered across modern-day Turkey who are feeling the squeeze of being cultural outsiders.

Peter gives them a third option: Don't fight back, and don't hide - live 'other' – live holy.

Today, believers feel that same growing cultural friction, 1 Peter 1 isn't just ancient history, it's a manual for how to stand firm, stay joyful, and live distinctly when the world, or family treats you like an exile.

Remember this:

Everything around us - status, comfort, political power, cultural approval - is like grass that withers and fades but only the Word of God and the inheritance guarded for you in heaven will last.

So, this week, don't react the way you used to as in don't fight fire with fire, but be *hagios* - set apart and stretch yourself out (*ektenōs*) to love people when it costs you energy and crave the pure, unadulterated Word of God so you can grow strong in the middle of the pressure.

God loves you!

Where verse 22 KJV & NKJV "Fervently" Gets It Right

High Intensity: The Greek word ektenōs describes maximum effort and full energy. In modern English, "*fervently*" delivers that high-intensity punch much better than softer words like "deeply."

Modern Scholar Support: Translators for the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and Legacy Standard Bible (LSB) - which are widely considered the most literal modern English translations - both chose "fervently" independently of the KJV's older English style.

Different Metaphors: In English, "fervent" comes from a root meaning heat or fire. The Greek word ektenōs comes from a root meaning to stretch out or strain, like an athlete reaching for a finish line.

Endurance Over Emotion: Because of that stretching image, the Greek carries a strong sense of persistence and endurance - loving someone even when it stretches your patience or costs you energy. "Fervently" captures the *intensity* of the effort, while words like "earnestly" or "constantly" try to capture the *determination* behind it.