

# 1<sup>st</sup> PETER BIBLE STUDY

1 Peter 1:22-25

Lesson #7

## Introduction

Speak briefly in recap of previous verses. Lay foundation for these last verses of chapter one.

### The Word That Endures Forever

*22 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, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For,*

*"All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass.*

*The grass withers, And the flower falls off,*

*25 But the word OF THE LORD endures forever."*

*And this is the word which was preached to you.*

1 Peter 1:22-25 (NASB)

In Verse 22 Peter makes a slight shift in emphasis, from the deep and profound workings of God and his predestined plans and operations to the subject of love among the brethren. At first reading it almost seems out of place, and context. But if we think back to verse 8, we remember that Peter said "though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him." In our immediate preceding verses we were exhorted to be holy, because our God is holy, and then reminded of the immense sacrifice that was offered on our behalf to afford our redemption. Now in this verse we're reminded of the great and powerful motivating force behind God's whole creation plan.

In Ephesians chapter 1 we're told that it is:

*In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*

Eph 1:4-6 (NASB)

and in 1John we're told:

*9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

1 John 2:9-11 (NASB)

When the revelations are profound, and the call to holiness is explicit and binding, it's precisely then that we're reminded that the whole point behind all of this creation plan of God is one of love. It is God, who desires a loving family to which He may display His infinite glory, and on whom He may pour out all His infinite blessings, who has instigated, and is in full control of everything. He has planned it carefully, down to the minutest details, and has included within it, every means that will ever be necessary for its full implementation.

Peter began this thought with a declaration that they had all ready done something. That they had already, as an act of obedience to the truth, purified their souls for a sincere love of the brethren. What is the obedience to the truth that purifies one's soul? To answer this question we need only remember back to Peter's opening verses. He told us that we have been chosen by the foreknowledge of God, by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ, and be sprinkled with His blood. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, wrought upon the souls of men, which induce holiness of life and a fervent love from the heart for the Lord Jesus, and all of those whom He calls his own.

But this is only half of the meaning. That work which is wrought in the heart must be worked out subjectively in our tangible daily lives. The kind of love being discussed here is the kind that is a matter of choice, a self sacrificing love that seeks first the benefit of others, even at the expense of self, and then demonstrates itself in its actions towards others. This is a choice that we make to meet the needs, whether spiritual, physical, emotional, financial, or whatsoever of our fellow brothers and sisters out of a loving desire to do so, that has been wrought in our hearts by the work of the Holy Spirit.

In his own epistle, James, the Lord's brother, spoke very clearly on this issue in Chapter 2, verses 14 through 26 where he sought it to make it very clear that genuine faith, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is not merely an abstract principle. Faith, just as love, are words that are commonly used all the time. James was speaking of faith, and Peter here in his epistle was speaking of love, but they were making the same point, which is that both of these are commonly counterfeited. There is no end to those who claim they have faith, and no end to those who claim they have love, so how does one recognize the genuine from the counterfeit? The answer is amazingly simple as the apostle John stated in his epistle when he said "don't be deceived, it is those who practice righteousness who are righteous," and likewise it is those who demonstrate their faith who have faith, and it is those who demonstrate their love who have love.

If we wish to know ourselves that the things that we speak, and the things we tell others, are actually true concerning our own affections and beliefs, then all we have to do is take a good realistic look at what we do, day by day and hour by hour, and we will know if our own faith, and our own love, is true and genuine, and has been wrought in our heart by a work of the Holy Spirit. Objective self-examination can be very enlightening and often a bit frightening, but would we rather do it ourselves now while there's time to take corrective action, or simply wait for the Lord to do it for us?

Certainly sanctification and transformation are imperatives of scripture, but they're really a means to an end. All of the preparations, the trials, the tribulations and triumphs, are progressively fashioning these simple clay pots (us) into vessels of glory and honor. And the reason for all this, is one of divine and everlasting love. It is love that is the adhesive that binds the members of the kingdom of God together eternally. God certainly could have used His omnipotent power, or His fierce threats of wrath, to intimidate His kingdom people into worship and obedience, but He didn't, instead He chose to use voluntary love as His instrument of cohesive power.

It is God's love for us, and our love for Him that makes us want to worship Him, and Him want to bless us. This is the final kingdom attitude when all is said and done. We will desire, and be, holy as He is holy, and we will be perfectly obedient from our heart's to all His commandments, but unless we do all this from a heart of love, it wouldn't really be a paradise, either for us or for the Lord. The kingdom of God wasn't designed to be a place of admirable scholars, or a place of fearful slaves, but a place of childlike lovers, whose heart's and affection's are firstly and wholly captured by the Lord. Who have left everything that the world has to offer to trustingly follow after Him. And it is only those who end up like this who will ever be there at the end. But we may rejoice my dear brothers and sisters, those of us who have been chosen by the foreknowledge of God, and are undergoing the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to bring us into willful and joyful obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, because we have been born again by a seed which is imperishable, which seed is the living and enduring word of God.

Now, moving on, verse 24 and the first half of 25 are a kind of condensed quote taken from Isaiah 40, verses 6-8. This is a relatively simple statement that poses no theological challenges, it uses a very simple analogy to make a very profound point. All created things have a time limit. Plants produce flowers which bloom to glory for a short season, but then eventually they die. People are born, they mature, they reach the years of their glory, whatever level that might be, but irregardless they get old and they die. In this, the king and the pauper share the very same fate. Both will get old, and both will pass away, and there's absolutely no escaping this reality.

Mankind really has no tangible experience with anything that's eternal. Really, eternity to mankind, is but an abstract principle. We can kind of perceived it, though it defies human logic. We can discuss it, and theorize about it, but we can't see it, touch it, or in any way take hold of it. We have never in our entire lives, ever even seen anything that is eternal. We have telescopes that search the heavens, and microscopes that probe the depths, but we have never found anything in this universe that is eternal. Everything we know and everything we've ever found is perishable.

I just watched a very interesting documentary by the History Channel about the sun. It discussed what the sun is made up of, and how it can sustain the nuclear reactions that are taking place. At the end the scientists acknowledged that the sun has a finite amount of fuel, and that it will eventually expend that fuel and cease to be capable of supporting our solar system. They believe that it will take about 5 billion years for that to happen, but nonetheless they acknowledge that our solar system, as well as the entire universe itself is only temporary. It is not eternally self sustaining.

So, unless there's something afterwards that we can't see, then even the atheists freely acknowledge that human existence is only temporary, and eternity is something entirely beyond our grasp. Eternity simply does not exist in the present visible, tangible creation.

But praise be to God that we have His word. The Lord has declared that He will accomplish all that He set out to do, all that He said He would do, and His declarations are eternal. They transcend time and space, they transcend matter and energy, and reside within an eternal omnipotent Being, who does not wear out nor grow old. He never runs out of fuel because He is the fuel, and his ability to supply is unlimited.

There have been many great men (carnal men) in the course of history. Men with great power, and men with great wisdom, and they had considerable influence during their lifetimes, but eventually they all passed away. The things that these men initiated often lived many years past them, but eventually all of their works, and often even their memories faded into obscurity. Carnal men have declared that they would rule the world. Carnal men have declared that they were gods, but they all passed away with time. So the fact is, from a carnal aspect, humanity has never found anything or anyone whatsoever that holds any possible promise of eternity. The only thing that mankind has ever been introduced to, in his entire existence, that has any possibility of holding a promise for eternity is the word of God. No carnal men, no philosophers, no writers, no scientists, have ever found or produced anything that has any realistic possibility of being eternal.

So the simple fact is, unless the word of God is true, and God is real, then there is no such thing as eternal. Every astronomical body, every law of physics, is based on temporal elements. As I said earlier, none of our instruments has ever found anything eternal, so, if "eternal" is something more than just a word, something more than just an abstract principle, then the only thing we've ever found, in the history of our existence as a species, that has any possibility of meeting that definition is the declared Word of God. If that is not eternal, then there is no such thing as eternal.

But the good news is that all of the evidence available to us conclusively affirms the authenticity of the word of God. Everything recorded in the holy Scriptures, every prophecy, has been 100% accurate. Of course some of them are still awaiting their fulfillment, and we can readily recognize which ones they are, but up to this point in history the word of God has proven to be flawless and perfect. (Example)

I recently came across a video clip, either on television or on the Internet I'm not certain, where a gentleman was being interviewed regarding his views of the Bible. Again I'm working from memory, but I believe this gentleman was a college professor. He didn't believe in God or in the Bible, and he made the comment that no biblical prophecy has ever come true. He said they were so vague and nondescript that a couple of them looked like they might have come true because they were so obscure, but no definite biblical scripture has ever come true. You see, this is a classic example of someone indiscriminately postulating their own opinions from a position of absolute ignorance. Because he is convinced in his mind that God does not exist, and therefore the Scriptures cannot possibly be true, he feels perfectly comfortable fabricating any kind of critique he wishes, without ever having studied the content. But because of his position as a professor many will think that he knows what he's talking about, when in fact, he knows absolutely nothing whatsoever about the subject on which he so confidently speaks. But those who are familiar with the word of God know better.

That which God has declared in advance, He has also done when the time came. Humanity has every reason to believe that the word of God is true and eternal, and furthermore that it is the only thing that truly is such. As the prophet Isaiah declared, and as Peter repeated, the grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this is the whole point that Peter wishes to make at the end of all of those things that he has declared in chapter one. He has spoken many marvelous and wonderful things concerning God's predetermined plans, and his personal protection of his chosen, and the work He's doing within them through his Holy Spirit, and Peter wants to assure them that the things that he has spoken to them are absolutely true and certain. They are not merely clever words of men, not fanciful works of literature, but rather they are the words of the one and only eternal Entity in existence. They are the very eternal words of God. And this eternal word of God is that good news that was preached to them.

*Therefore, in closing, let me say that the only place in this universe where we humans may find and actually examine anything that is actually eternal is by opening the pages of our Holy Bibles, for there, and there alone, resides the words that speak of eternal life. The Son of God, Jesus, said that He is the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by Him, (Jn 14:6) and God the Father said, concerning His Son, "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him." (Mk 9:7) Praise be to God for His eternal word. Amen.*

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