



The Pursuit of Substance

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

March 17, 2024 - Part 3

1 PETER 1:22-2:8

Peter's opening comments were centered on three subjects, Kingdom principles to know and be involved in:

1. A New Birth (Born Again)

A new sight. No longer a victim but free to live in victory. A new source to draw from, a well that will never run dry.

2. An Eternal Perspective

This transformation will lead to a life of persecution and suffering. These are not bad words. These are the vehicles by which God changes the world. When they SEE us they SEE Him.

3. A Call to Holiness

This new life gives you an appetite for NEW things. Old ways will not satisfy the new direction of your life. We are called to be sanctified, set apart ones.

He continues in this next section on three important Kingdom precepts.

1 Peter 1:22-25

²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding 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, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

THE SURE FOUNDATION

Peter quotes, with some deviation, Isaiah 40:6-8. In it he states, the word of the Lord remains forever. James uses a similar phrase in James 1:10-11. The writer in Psalm 103:15-16 declares the same kingdom principle.

Peter puts a flashlight on two aspects of God's word standing forever. The word "remains" can also mean "endures". In other words, it can never be made ineffective. The claim cannot be understated. You will NEVER find a more sure foundation than Jesus. His foundation is proven by transformed lives.

Thus Scripture itself proves that God's word, which is the word by which they were reborn, can never be superseded. And, adds Peter, if by any chance he has not been clear, it is this word which was announced as good news when the gospel was preached to them and they were converted. This gospel is God's re-creating or regenerating word, as opposed to his creative word in the beginning or the words he spoke in between through the prophets

1 Peter 2:1-3

¹ So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

COMMUNITY DESTROYING VICES

What has been gotten rid of, however, are not the grosser vices of paganism, but community-destroying vices that are often tolerated by the modern church. Here Peter, like James and 1 John, shows his concern for community solidarity. Especially when a community is under pressure there is a tendency to begin bickering and division, which only makes the community that much more vulnerable to outside pressure.

1. Malice: desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another, either because of a hostile impulse or out of deep-seated meanness

The first vice is "malice." While in some contexts this term simply means "evil," "depravity," or "vice," in contexts like ours it indicates "ill-will," or "malice"; that is, "the force that destroys fellowship" and is therefore inimical to Christian community. As it is here, it is frequently joined with grumbling, bitterness, and envy (1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; Tit. 3:3; Jas. 1:21). In this term we find the inner problem of the heart that will show up in the behaviors mentioned in the context. The Poison of vices is really seen and understood in the fact that the poison doesn't stop it grows.

2. Deceit: the act or practice of deceiving; concealment or distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading; duplicity; fraud; cheating:

Next come "deceit" and "insincerity" (or "hypocrisy"). The first term is found three times in 1 Peter (2:1, 22; 3:10). It indicates speaking or acting with ulterior (usually base) motives, that is, anything less than speaking the full and honest truth from the heart. This is how opponents treated Jesus (Mark 14:1; Matt. 26:4) and Paul (Acts 13:10). **When deceit meets insincerity, hypocrisy is birthed. Hypocrisy has divided more churches than the devil ever has.**

3. Hypocrisy: a pretense of having a virtuous character, moral or religious beliefs or principles, etc., that one does not really possess.

It is a vice rooted in our twisted hearts (Mark 7:22; Rom. 1:29). Therefore it must not characterize the presentation of God's truth (2 Cor. 12:16; 1 Thess. 2:3; 2 Cor. 4:2; 6:4–7), nor can it be allowed in the Christian community. Likewise "insincerity" means "any type of pretense or deception before God or man," or any inconsistency between doctrine and practice, inward thought and outward action, behavior in the church and behavior at home or in the marketplace.

4. Envy: a feeling of discontent or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc.

"Envy" is an inward attitude behind much deceit and insincerity. It appears frequently in the vice lists in the NT as characteristic of the old life (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21, 26; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:3), and it was one of the motives of Christ's crucifixion (Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10). It is often associated with community strife and party spirit in the vice lists. Obviously, if one has the mind of Christ that seeks the good of others (Phil. 2:1–5), envy would be an impossible contradiction.

5. Slander: defamation; calumny: The accusations are based on hearsay, rumor, or intentional slander, and remain undocumented and unproved.

Envy often works itself out in "slander." The Christians, of course, were victims of this (1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16), but that does not necessarily stop a community from practicing it. Deceit is practiced to a person's face, when one speaks only nicely of him or her, but for the person with envy and malice within, the insincerity will come out as he or she criticizes the person to others in that person's absence. Whether this criticism is cloaked as "sharing a problem," a "prayer request," or a "concern," it makes little difference. Paul includes this activity in a vice list (2 Cor. 12:20), and James points out that it is a usurping of the role of God (Jas. 4:11). Therefore in his list Peter has neatly cut the ground from any practice other than open truth and love among members of the Christian community; it may be the "tough love" of a rebuke, but Christians should be able to trust that no ulterior motives lie behind fellow-believers' actions and that nothing is said in their absence that has not already been said to their face

Triangulation (*Pastor Jay's definition*): A concept where things get talked about but never addressed. When they get addressed, it usually involves hurt feelings and break in relationship.

The Fateful Five must be dealt with if a church community is to reach the place of maturity to see the move of God that is promised. If you are saying that I am glad that they are here to hear this, you are a part of the problem not the solution. Create in me a clean heart God and renew a steadfast Spirit in me.

What is to be desired is milk. In both 1 Cor. 3:1–2 and Heb. 5:13 milk is pictured as basic teaching for new converts, but the Christians addressed should be far beyond it. Here there is no such negative tone, for milk is appropriate food for the newborn; nor is a contrast stated or implied with some later stage of Christian maturity. Rather, “milk” is here a symbol used as it commonly was in later Judaism for spiritual nourishment. Indeed, the picture of milk was powerful enough that in the third-century Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus at least after baptism a cup of milk mixed with honey was given to new Christians along with the bread and wine at the celebration of the eucharist (Hippolytus, AT 21).

1 Peter 2:4-8

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” ⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” ⁸ and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

LIVING STONES

The analogy moves from nourishment to stability and honor. Christ is a “living stone.” This both introduces the stone imagery that will dominate the next five verses and designates Christ not as a monument or dead principle, but as the living, resurrected, and therefore life-giving one. Two things are said about the stone. First, people rejected him. Ps. 118:22, which will be quoted in v. 7, is already in mind. This theme, which came from the oral tradition of Jesus’ sayings (Mark 12:10), also appears in Acts 4:11. The term “rejected” implies examination by builders and then casting aside as a reject, unfit for the future building of the nation. With that the readers can surely identify, for they were feeling the rejection of their fellow-citizens as well. Searching the 2x4 pile, they rejected the ways of God because it was narrow and straight.

The living stone requires:

Price - you didn't pay it, He did.

Process - Surrender to Him and His way.

Product - You honor God and His way, and He will honor you.

Davids, P. H. (1990). The First Epistle of Peter (p. 78-85). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.