

# Purified by Obedience

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[ 0 : 00 ] We've reached a milestone in our study of 1 Peter.

! Tonight we will finish up our look at chapter 1.! And then next week, Lord willing, of course, we will begin our study of chapter 2.

Dr. MacArthur begins this portion of his study of 1 Peter with an illustration from the early 1900s. A building engineer working at a job site during the construction of a three-story building, which was pretty high back then, was at the top when he tripped and he plunged downward.

Just an everyday laborer, they called those guys common laborers, heard him yelling as he was plunging to the earth. Everybody knew it meant certain death, or at least serious injury.

[ 1 : 22 ] Realizing that the engineer was going to land on him, the laborer chose to break his fall with his own body, so he didn't move. After the collision, the engineer was only slightly injured, but the laborer suffered serious injuries, life-changing injuries.

He never worked again, for one thing. And years later, the laborer was interviewed by a reporter and asked how his life was going. He said he was fined due to the generosity of the engineer.

The engineer gave the guy half of all the money he made and even made him a partner in his engineering firm.

And as a result, his family had a home and food on the table. His kids were able to afford an education and so forth. Of course, the more I thought about that story, if that happened in our day, it would be a completely different one.

Teams of lawyers would have shown up, throwing their cards out, you know, for people to pick up. Some would have wanted to represent the laborer, others the engineer, who had tripped, and they would find out what he tripped on.

[ 2 : 54 ] They'd file a lawsuit on that. Still others, they'd sue the work site, and on and on ad nauseum. But for our purposes of this evening, this is a story, apparently true, of substitutionary sacrifice.

The guy was willing to sacrifice his own life or health to try to save this man's life, and did. Well, we know the story of Christ at Calvary.

His is a story of supernatural love. And that love goes far beyond the norm. I'm somewhat familiar with a little bit of criminal investigations.

I used to do them with Lee when we were at Phillips. We had fun. During those, you try to answer six basic questions.

If you can get those answered, you're going to probably solve the case. Who, what, when, where, how, and why. If you can answer those, you're well down the road on solving that thing.

[ 4 : 20 ] And certainly the more that you can answer, the more definitively and closer you do come in solving the case. Well, in the lesson today, we're not going to tackle those six questions, but we are going to attempt to answer four of them.

We're going to try and answer when, who, how, and why. And the answer to these will go a long way in providing the explanation of our passage, which reads as follows.

This is 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 22 to 25. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 22.

The living and abiding Word of God. For all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass. The grass withers and the flower fades.

But the Word of God remains forever. And this Word is the good news that was preached to you. So the first thing we're going to look at tonight is when, we'll use the W word there, when were believers enabled to love.

[ 6 : 15 ] And in the first part of verse 22, it says this, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth.

Now, Scripture, both Old and New Testament, makes it clear that the unsaved person can't demonstrate true love, and by that I mean godly love, on a consistent basis.

Listen to some words found in Luke's Gospel, chapter 11, verse 42. But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint, and rue, and every herb, and neglect justice, and the love of God.

These you ought to have done without neglecting the others. So we see in this passage just how concerned with the minute details of external religion people can be, but without manifesting the details of God's love.

They neglect to put on display the marks of a genuine believer. And God has actually marked out His believers in every age.

[ 7 : 51 ] And He's placed a mark on us in our day. What is this, 21st century? I lose track at my age. He's placed a mark on us.

Here's the mark. John 13, 35. By this, by this mark, all people will know that you are My disciples. Okay, well what mark? If you have love one for another. That's how He marked us out. If we have love for one another.

When a man or a woman was genuinely saved, they were able to genuinely put on display supernatural love. And this reaches all the way back into the Old Testament.

It's not a New Testament phenomenon. Ezekiel knew it. He knew this reality. In Ezekiel chapter 36, starting in verse 25, it says, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols.

[ 9 : 24 ] I will cleanse you. And then Ezekiel says, and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you.

And I'm going to remove that heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Now the purification spoken of here is not a human work. It's not accomplished by human work.

This is a divine work. And it is a work that only God can accomplish in the life of a believer.

Paul had something to say about this in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 26 to 31 for consider your calling brothers not many of you were wise according to worldly standards not many were powerful not many were of noble birth but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong God chose what is low and despised in the world even things that are not to bring to nothing things that are so that no human being might boast in the presence of God and because of him you are in Christ

[ 11 : 34 ] Jesus who became to us wisdom from God righteousness and sanctification and redemption so that as it is written let the one who boasts boast in the Lord that's where our boasting originates and ends in the Lord additionally there's a good rule of thumb here in the New Testament obedience is a synonym for faith we actually don't find a whole lot of references to faith in this portion of scripture that we've been looking at but it is talking about faith when using the word obedience Paul had a great grasp of this truth and expressed it like this in Romans the great book of Romans chapter 6 verse 16 do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves you are slaves of the one whom you obey either of sin which leads to death or obedience which leads to righteousness and as I said before faith is not a human initiated work of obedience

Paul expressed this in Ephesians two verses you all know Ephesians 2 8 and 9 for by grace you have been saved through faith and that is not your own doing it is the gift of God not a result of work so that no one may boast but when such faith is present it will manifest itself in a believer obeying the truth it will manifest itself in God's love directed toward others remember that's the mark we've been marked out with that so this leads to our next question who are believers to love that's in the middle part of verse 22 we're to exercise and experience a sincere brotherly love when we are saved by the

Lord we become members of Christ's body that's always been a reference to the church in the word and we talk about the invisible body of Christ the spirit of God enters believers and grants them the capacity for godly sacrificial love that's a sincere love and Paul issued a number of times in his writings warnings to avoid hypocrisy when we are loving the brethren he's looking for sincerity the Holy Spirit actually uses the word sincere love and I found that interesting that is a standard for all genuine believers to exercise genuine love that is a type of love that

God uses to attract a world of lost people to himself to his church that is a kind of love that awakens people to their need for salvation well let's do another one told you it was a short lesson how are

believers to love third part of verse 22 love one another earnestly from a pure heart the new American standard version uses the word fervently the ESV uses the description of earnest love either word basically means the same thing when loving go all out go all out this love does not come from legalism doesn't originate there it comes from the heart it is not impacted by earthly limitations because it is placed in the heart of a person and it's put there by God himself that's where it originates this was captured wonderfully by Paul when he wrote a very familiar passage of scripture scripture we call it the fruit of the indwelling spirit of

God find it in Galatians chapter 5 but I say walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh for the desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh for these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do but if you are led by the spirit you are not under the law now the works of the flesh are evident sexual immorality impurity sensuality idolatry sorcery enmity strife jealousy fits of anger rivalries dissensions divisions envy drunkenness orgies and things like this if we looked up all those words we would discover words in there for pornography and words in there for drugs abusing drugs and dealing drugs to name just a few

[18:54] I warn you this is God talking through Paul I warn you as I warned you before that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God then he gets into the good stuff but the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self-control against such things there is no law you're not going to break any law when you exercise those and those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and with its desires if we live by the spirit let us also keep in step with the spirit by the way that's

Galatians 5 16 to 25 how do you know that you're living by the fruit of the spirit you know it because you see the production of fruit in your life godly fruit and he just named a bunch of them that's how we know now we've already answered three of our key words in this lesson we've answered when who and how and the last one we'll address tonight is the word why and in 1st Peter chapter 1 verses 23 to 25 since you've been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of

God for all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of 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 believers are to love one another only then will we be living a life that is consistent with the life that Christ bestows on his children this is how the apostle John put it using words inspired by the spirit in his great epistle of 1st John chapter 5 verses 1 to 2 everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God and everyone who loves the father loves whoever has been born of him by this we know that we love the children of

God when we love God and obey his commandments we are expected to love because we've been born again in the Greek language the new birth happens at some point in our past but it has ongoing results continuing results that word born again is another in the Greek it means born from above spiritual birth that comes down from God and one of those results is that we still show love one for another long after we've been born again it's not supposed to subside I think sometimes it has in me I hope not never to be outdone the apostle Paul equated this life with Christ to be a death interesting language he started with death and then he went to new life with Christ

Romans chapter 6 verse 3 and 4 do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father we too might walk in newness of life those of us who have been around here a while we should remember that that was Dr.

McBride's comments from the baptistry when he would baptize he would quote most of that the baptism spoken of here is not what we each went through by being immersed in water the baptism spoken of here is that we've been placed into his death meaning we have died to the old life and now share with him in the new life by speaking of this in terms of death and new life we're talking about a radical transformation but we're not talking about total victory we're not talking about the absence of sin in our life and the fact of the matter is our war with sin becomes in many respects even more intense in the new life we war against the flesh the world and the devil but before the new birth we were defined by terms like lawless godless and selfish and now we cling to terms such as repentance trust and love far quite different it's also important to note that the new birth is monogistic monogical monogical meaning one it is a work solely of the

[ 26 : 04 ] Holy Spirit we do not meet the Spirit halfway and then work together to somehow bring about our salvation he does the saving and we do the receiving when Jesus revealed to Nicodemus about being born again of course Nicodemus was very confused but he used the example of human birth how much do infants cooperate in their birth my mom never told me I did anything to help out but maybe she didn't know she was asleep at the time down at Washington County Memorial Hospital so how do we describe the new birth or being born again or born from above well

Nicodemus he wanted to know that so Jesus said it's like the wind I think that's great it's like the wind I've had guys ask what's what's being born again like it's like the wind it's good enough for Jesus it should be good enough for us right the wind blows if you don't believe that move to Oklahoma we had we had five days of wind up there at my farm and then it blew in the storms we had you know 15 hours of storms the wind blows where it wishes you hear the sound of it but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going we had a lot of wind the last several days where'd it go I presume it's blowing somewhere and then he adds so is everyone who's born of the spirit it's like the wind guys in our passage in first peter the holy spirit uses the word seed important biblical concept seed seed in the scriptures usually represents the source of life all life comes from a seed it may be a spiritual seed or a physical seed but in the new birth it is not seed which is perishable

God initiates the new birth with a seed that is imperishable very important concept so what is the imperishable seed that God uses it is the living and enduring word of God that brothers is the imperishable seed the word of God and that's why we're to immerse ourselves in it