

A Practical Study of 1 PETER:

Practice for Suffering Saints

“How Suffering Fits in the Father’s Plan”

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all Grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”

Pattern Number Two – Get Tough and Start Growing – 1 Peter 1:13-2:3

Key Verses 1:13 & 2:2

Whereas in our first study we talked about and focused upon what God has provided for us. Now in this study we’re going to learn what we do in view of this great salvation that has been provided for us.

You’ll remember last time, we talked together about 3 important things.

First of all, Peter rejoices that he has been born again to a blessed hope by what God has done for him in raising Jesus

Christ from the dead.

Secondly, we saw salvation future in that an inheritance is reserved for us. It is imperishable, undefiled and it won't fade away.

Then our third focus, after we talked about the inheritance, was salvation right now. And that is—no matter what happens, we are protected by the power of God.

And realize the fact that when it seems inconsistent and something hits your life, don't ask the question "WHY?" ask the question "WHAT?"—What is it Father that You want me to learn from this crisis experience that You've allowed to happen in my life?

Whatever you do, don't ever get to the place where you lose your confidence in God.

You want to know the consequences, just talk to Adam and Eve. The evil one longs to get a believer to the point where that believer loses his confidence in God's ability to handle life. And as a result, it provides an excuse for the believer to take matters into his own hands and try to make a miracle out of a mess. And every time you do that, you get a bigger mess.

Now, since we focused in our first study on what God has done, we turn now to what you and I do in response to what God has done.

Let me give you two verses in Philippians 2, I think that will help us.

Philippians 2:12, 13

So then my dearest friends as you have always followed by advise and that not only when I was present to give it so now that I am far away be keener than ever to work out the salvation that God has given you with a proper sense of awe and responsibility for it is God who is at work within you giving you the will and the power to achieve His purpose.

You see, some of you are back at TrailWest again for the second, some seventh, eighth year—we've got all kinds of lettermen sitting around. I have a right, as your brother in Christ, to have expected that there would be growth and development in your life over this last year spiritually. Because some of you on this mountain last year told me you were going to take the little one-year Bible and you were going to read it through.

And it would be fun to saddle up next to you and I wouldn't in the world embarrass you for nothing in this group, to ask you to raise your hands. But the Spirit of God knows what you did with that commitment. Did you read through it? Did you hang in there? Did you stay with it?

You see, those are the things that really develop spiritual

dynamic. It's when you don't feel like it that you do it. It's just keeping on, keeping on that makes us more Christlike.

Now, don't equate Christlikeness to the number of committees you serve on in the church.

Don't make Christlikeness to me the number of verses you've memorized.

Don't make Christlikeness to me the number of things you've done in service.

Spirituality never comes as a result of attending meetings and being servants—I mean being in service.

Spirituality only comes one way, and you're going to get that today.

There are two incredible things that have to happen to every individual in order for him to start cooperating with the plan for the laws of growth.

And if you're following these, then you're becoming more like Him.

You're saying "Well, Anderson, you're talking a one-way street. We as the conferees have every right to look at your life and to see some change." You have exactly that.

And it has been a great year. It's been a year of fantastic

opportunity. A year of blessing in my personal life because I made a commitment that I was never going to face a day without reading the scripture and spending time with the Father personally without doing anything with my studies and writing. And I've done it.

And I thank God for that because my life has been enriched. I feel like I'm closer to Him today than I was a year ago. And I know one thing, I sure am a whole lot closer to the goal. Because you know, we don't have much more time down here if we're going to be with Him.

And I certainly don't want to come to that occasion and shrink away in shame at Him in His coming.

I feel in some ways a lot like Peter. He's older now and he's really sorted things out. And so the things he's telling you are really important. And if you're hung up and you're off on a side track some way, listen to Peter. He's going to help you back on the track. And help you to work out this glorious salvation that has been worked in by the Spirit of God in coming to know Him.

So this study #2 really is a naturally, normal off-shoot of study #1.

Now that God is done, what am I supposed to do with God has done? You know there's so much preaching today about pie-in-the-sky by and by. Well wonderful! I signed my name on the dotted line, I became a Christian. Now I'm just supposed to sit

around and listen to boring Bible studies and preachers until I die and then I can draw on this deal when I get up there.

And a lot of people think that. There is not very much good preaching on Christian growth. I mean, if you want to get them in in droves, focus on experience and programs and get them in the church house and preach the gospel to the saved. That's where you get your buzz. That's where the action is.

And it's not very popular to turn and to pick up Peter and start talking about what you've got to do in order to grow spiritually. It isn't very popular because that means you're going to have to do something. And frankly, you don't want to do something.

We just kind of want to wait until finally the time comes when we're going to be there.

That is not God's program. Pick up with me at verse 13 and you'll see what I mean.

v. 13 Wherefore, when you have girded the loins of your mind, be well-balanced, set your hope fully upon the grace that is being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Whenever you see a "therefore" or a "wherefore" you find out what it's THERE FOR—what does it do?

“Wherefore” in view of the fact that you’ve been born again into a blessed hope, in view of the fact that you have an inheritance reserved in heaven for you, in view of the fact that you’re protected by the power of God—this is what you need to do.

You need to “[gird] the loins of your mind.” Have you done that?

Now you say gird the loins of your mind? Come on. What does it mean?

I know that’s kind of an archaic term, isn’t it? Gird the loins of your mind.

You have to understand, our clothing is a little different. We talk about when we’re going to exercise, we get into our running gear. We get into as little clothing as is permissible and then we run because you don’t want to be cumbered down with a whole lot of overload. And that’s the picture.

In those days, they wore these robes and headbands and all that. But what happened if they come on a job and they’ve got a job to do, do they leave their long flowing robes on while they try to do work? No because it would be tangling all around their feet. So what do they do? They take the long flowing robe and they tuck it up under this big swath or this big belt here. So, really, it kind of looks like a big bulky bunch of material around the middle.

But all that's showing now is their running shorts. This means they're ready for action. They've gotten their legs unencumbered and they're ready now to move into action. And so, the thought here is one of preparing for action.

Why is it necessary to do that with your mind?

We're living in a time of mind control. We're living in a time when weird things are happening and people are thinking some pretty wild thoughts.

It's also a time of great teaching of error. And Paul says "Lest you be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine that blows." In other words, you think over here for a while and you think over here for a while. Then you think over here. And I'll tell you, in the religious world it almost scares the socks off of you to see some of these people being deceived by mental tactics by people who come along with a secret to tell you they've got the truth!

When a person comes along like that, you need to really test them because there is no new truth. The revelation is complete. That we might have a new aspect, a new understanding of truth but none of this NEW TRUTH stuff.

"God told me this and so I'm coming to tell you." Check that out and also find out what they ate the night before. Usually that will really help. They probably went to a Mexican restaurant and they burped technicolor and they had a dream that was way out and so they're going to tell you what they

saw. So you've got to "[gird] up the loins of your mind."

Now, you realize the Bible has more to say about the mind of the individual than almost anything else when it comes to the whole business of becoming godly. Why? Jesus said of course, that "out of the heart come the issues of life." He's referring to the mind. They thought of it as being the seat of the emotion.

Solomon says "As a man is thinking in his heart, so is he."

Sometimes we think we can get away with really sloppy, rotten thought down inside. But eventually, watch it, under stress it will come out.

Incredible! Have you had somebody surprise you by some words they use under stress? Or some response under stress?

You say, "Whoa! I didn't know he was like that!"

Well, what are they telling you? They're telling you they've had a mask and they've been phony. It's underneath and they've been thinking it the whole time. Because out it comes—under a stressful set of circumstances.

So Peter says "Let's get to the heart of it."

"As a man thinks in his heart so is he." So it's the mind.

You know, Peter and Paul agree on this. Paul spent a lot of time talking about the mind. He says in:

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ.

Ok, that's a great verse. You know why? Because God wants us to be Christlike. So if we begin to think Christ-thoughts we will begin to become Christlike. How does Christ think? Well when you see Christ under stress and temptation, what does he do? He comes out with a scripture 3 times. Just BAM! BAM! BAM! from the book of Deuteronomy. He lays the evil one level with the word of God. The focus is on the scriptures.

“Thy will have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee” David says.

Psalms 1: “O the joys of a man who doesn't walk in the council of the ungodly nor sit in the seat of scoffers.” What? “His delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law”—WHAT?—“he meditates.” He's filling his thoughts and his mind with the word of God.

That's the secret to spiritual growth. That's the first thing every new believer must do. That exceeds every other assignment that a believer has. Because when you start thinking right, you're going to start acting right.

And Peter says “As I look back on my life, the thing that is the most important is that I am a person who was thinking the thoughts of Christ. And as I think those thoughts, I begin to act like him.”

Here's another great one—2 Corinthians 10:5.

Oh, I got to teach this last year and I was so thrilled. I finally got to teach this verse.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Bring every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ.

Just realizing that “Hey! I’m thinking wrong!” It’s realizing I’m thinking in the realm of disobedience. I’m thinking in the realm where I’m excusing myself instead of focusing upon bringing those thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ.

I love how the apostle Paul especially relates Christian living so much to athletics. And especially to running and boxing—basically are the two biggies. I think he probably spent many hours at the Olympic games because he had this incredible ability to see that a person who was really a Christian that was going somewhere was a well-disciplined, oiled machine like an athlete. An athlete with an Olympic performance is kind of a picture.

You know, we’re living in a world of turned-off Christianity by most macho, highly disciplined men. And I think that’s the greatest tragedy in the world.

Really, if there ought to be a core of individuals who are really responding to the Christian message, it ought to be the guys who are the most disciplined. The guys who really know how

to spill their insides for others and how to really give of themselves. We don't see much of that.

As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

If we're going to win when it's under pressure, then we've got to think right! And the reason we've got so much crummy press right now in the church, the body of Christ, is because we've got some people that aren't thinking right! Because if they were thinking right they'd act right! If they were thinking "God put me in this marriage and I have no alternative but to stay there until death do us part" then they won't think any different.

When the evil one comes in and says "This is temporary and after all eat, drink and be merry and have your party too!"

And they buy that trash! And so they go off and we say "Oh, man, I can't believe that happened to so-and-so."

We're thinking about it a long time before it ever happened. You just didn't see it on this earth.

We are the victim today of sin. Pretty sloppy shallow thinking.

And if there's ever a message that needs to come across, first of all before you're ever going to grow, is mental toughness.

If I could put this in layman's terminology.

One writer put it this way:

“Gird up the loins of your mind” is a figurative expression and it’s a little like “pull yourself together.” Well there’s actually no idiom that expresses the same thought in our language in customs. The idea is that we must gather all our mental powers toward and fully concentrate on the race that’s set before us.

James 1:22

Be ye doers of the word and not just hearers only.

Every one of you sitting in this room right now, if I ask you would say: “I can’t wait to stand before the Lord fully rejoicing in the fact that I’ve been faithful!” Right?

Mental toughness means I’m putting my money where my mouth is. It means “I’m going to do it no matter what!”

Evidently Peter had in mind the words of the Lord. You know a lot of these little phrases really take on understanding when you realize that Peter listened to the Lord preach a lot of powerful messages.

In Luke 12:35 and 36, listen to what the Lord says:

Luke 12:35-36

Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning and

you yourselves, like unto men, looking for their God.

“Loins girded about” and get your lights shining and start looking because your Lord is coming again.

Peter never got ahold of that. And so when he comes to the secret that makes all the difference it’s “gird up the loins.”

You know, this is the aorist tense. It’s an aorist command. Do you what that means? That means don’t pussy-foot around about it. Make up your decision—make up your mind—and don’t backtrack. Go ahead and do what you have to do. No excuses! Just get the job done!

The aorist tense communicates “once and for all.”

Make up your mind that this is what you’re going to do and then follow through—instead of letting the thing kind of drift there—and go.

You know what I discovered. I’ve yet to find a godly undisciplined individual who’s kind of just letting life happen to him.

The people who are the most godly that I know walk with God, are the people who really use every minute. And you almost feel like when you’re around them, they are a machine going from significant appointment to appointment.

They are people who mean business. They are people who

have made a decision. They are people who are in action. They are not idling. They're not drifting from this and that momentary attraction. There is mental discipline in their life. And you can feel it.

No wonder Paul could say in 1 Corinthians 9:24:

“The problem with you Corinthians is that if you would recognize everybody runs in a race but only one receives the prize. Therefore run that you might win and get the prize.”

And he says: “Those athletes, they do that to get a perishable crown but we an imperishable! Discipline your life to do that!”

And then you know what he says? “I treat my body roughly and I make it serve me lest when I am preaching to others, I would be ordered to stand aside!”

In other words, I just don't pamper my body. I just don't spend so much time with all kinds of excuses about the fact that my body is this way and so I just can't do it.

I was telling the runners coming up the hill, I nearly fell out of my chair in the dental office the other day not because it hurt but because of a little poster. They try to humor you at the dental office you know and so they put up these little posters. And it's kind of to get your mind off what they're getting ready to do to you.

And here's this poster right in front of me when I come in and

get in the dental chair. And it's a picture of this kind of puffy little poodle or something and her hair was all that multi-colored—you know like that rainbow colored—it was all [tied] with a pretty little ribbon up here.

And then she had these little white and red glasses made in the shape of hearts—she had that on. And then she had a shawl around her. And right underneath that it says “I don't do mornings.” Oh! I love that! That cracked me up! I thought there are so many Christians who are like that! “I don't do mornings! I'm a night person. I just don't have it in me to do mornings.”

How do you think that's going to sound at the Judgment Seat of Christ? “I don't do mornings. I don't function well early! And so as a result, my life went on and I really didn't do it.”

You see, it's so easy in our society to become lax. To become idle. To not think clear. And Peter says “the secret is to have clear sight, definite thought, eager purpose, and decided ends.”

Do you see that in Jesus? Wow! Just read the life of Jesus from the standpoint of what you're trying to catch on the intense discipline in his life.

You want to really admire somebody, watch Jesus.

John 9:4

I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day.
The night is coming when no man can work.

He is running to a deadline and he knows it's going to come at 33.

What about:

John 4:35-36

Don't sit around and tell me men that its four months and then cometh harvest. Behold I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look unto the fields. They are white already to harvest.

So we're sitting around we say "You know, I'm really going to get serious one of these days about God!"

Listen! Time is running out! And we are living in the greatest day of opportunity that any human being has ever had an opportunity to confront people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

People are eager and ready to learn. And they've gotten so much bad press, they sure love to talk about religion.

So why aren't we doing it? Why aren't we involved? Because we haven't got our own heads together yet! And so there's not this eagerness to battle the powers of the evil one and the

powers of darkness. And as a result, help others to come to know Jesus Christ.

Now, Peter gives two commands. He says:

1. “gird up the loins of your mind” and then he says “be well balanced.”

Boy do we need that!

Don’t go off on a deep end. Don’t go off on a tangent over here. “Be well-balanced.”

Don’t just get on one hobby-horse and start riding this into the ground! “Be well-balanced.”

2. “set your hope fully upon the grace that is being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

He’s saying set your hope on that and know that as you’re thinking right you’re going to act right. And you’re looking forward to the investment when at the revelation of Jesus Christ, you’re going to stand and all those thoughts are going to be made known to Him.

You see, Peter was aware of that. Jesus said “what you’re thinking in private will be made known at that day.”

And so he’s saying at the revelation of Jesus Christ, you want to gird up the loins of your mind. If you want to start thinking

right, recognize that your thoughts are going to be replayed. And that's a sobering thing.

So he says "be well-balanced." Don't go off on some deep end. And secondly, be those who are recognizing that their "hope [is] fully upon the grace that is being brought to [them] at the revelation."

Well, the apostle makes it quite clear that there is no holiness without a real effort. There is no holiness without a great deal of personal discipline in order for that to happen.

And see, much of the evangelical religious world is preaching another message.

They are saying "You want to be holy? You want walking with God? Get a spiritual zap! Have an experience! And Oh boy! You will all of a sudden become spiritual!"

No. That is not the truth. Just as I said no Christian service will make you spiritual, I can also say with great authority, no experience will either.

You can't tell me as you're sitting here today that if you go out here and get goose bumps all over you and see a fireball falling out of heaven and all of a sudden you start speaking in some strange languages and you see somebody start getting healed that you have all of a sudden made up for a whole lot of lost time and you are now a spiritual giant that exceeds all the rest of us. Forget it! I don't buy that. That is not authentic,

genuine New Testament Christianity.

New Testament Christianity is down in the trenches. And the reason we don't have much of it today is because we don't have much people doing it. We're doing a lot of talking but we're not putting our money where our mouth is! We're not mentally tough. So as a result, when the pressure comes on, we botch it up! And as a result of that, our entire conduct is just a very opposite of what it should be.

Now, verse 14.

v. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

What's he telling you? He says "With your attitude, get your head right. With your actions, don't allow those former passions to take control of you."

In other words, don't let that old way of life dominate you. That's the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. And don't let the flesh have it!

Now that means you've got to do something, doesn't it? It means down in the trenches, you've got to make some hard decisions about honesty—dishonesty, integrity—lack of integrity, moral issues—immoral issues. What am I going to do with these things? Am I going to let my passions reign or am I going to let the person of Jesus Christ get the glory because I deny myself and I treat my body roughly like I'm

supposed to do.

Now he can turn to action because he's talked about the thought. Because out of the thought comes the action. So he says "As obedient children,"—in light of what you know is right—"do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance."

Pouring out of right thinking will always come right action.

Do you know why sometimes some parents get shocked when their kids are teenagers? Is it because you focused this parent so much on their action, you forgot to focus on what they were thinking? And so when they finally got a chance to think they wanted to think, you were shocked by the way they acted. But they were thinking that all along but they never had a chance to tell you. As a result, there is a horrendous shock that comes when you see they caught a whole lot from you that related to things that maybe were not so spiritual but you thought they were.

And isn't it incredible how our kids could always pick the negative stuff to follow as an example. Don't be shocked. We've got to focus on what goes into that little mind.

That's why I'm so excited about what Mark and Donna are doing with your kids. They're teaching them to praise the Lord. And those kids have probably sat around the table and they've heard some pretty negative press, maybe. Maybe something's going to happen. Maybe they're going to press you

to start praising the Lord and talking about the good things that happen.

Why is that our mind always goes to the critical and the negative? And we're talking down. We're talking as though we're losing instead of really praising God for what He's done today.

You're thoughts in the mind so when the chips are down they'll make the right decision. They'll not allow the passion to rule. They won't be conformed!

That's the exact word that Paul uses in Romans 12. You're familiar with it, aren't you?

Romans 12:1

I beseech therefore, brethren, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice—[and what?]-don't be conformed.

Do you know how Phillips translates that?

Don't allow the world around you to squeeze you into its mold.

Satan is in the business of making ugly and he will squeeze you into his mold—the mold of the world—and they get that.

I remember many years ago our kids wanted me, because it was a fad at Christmas time, to buy them a set of Creepy Crawlers. You remember that? This was while I was up in the northwest in ministry. That was before I came to Texas. You don't need Creepy Crawlers down here because they're crawling all over the place. They're real here.

That was the most interesting little toy. They gave you this metal plastic mold. In fact, you had a whole bunch of them. And then you get these bottles of gooey plastic and you squeeze those little bottles into those molds—reds and yellows and blacks and greens. And then you just set it in the heat for just a minute and that plastic would harden. And then you would just take a pen and flip it out of the mold and you've got a Creepy Crawler.

We had spiders and snakes and ants and weird flying things laying on our plate that looked so real. You'd go "Woo!" when you saw one of them.

I told my kids at that time and I've never forgotten it. "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold."

The world is in the business of making Creepy Crawlers out of people. You want to be a Creepy Crawler? Then conform to the pattern of the world and that's what you're going to come out like.

He says:

“As obedient children, do not be conformed.”

What does that tell you? Before you can make that kind of decision you’ve got to “gird of up the loins of your mind” and you’ve got to thinking right. Because if you aren’t thinking right you’re not going to act right! You’re just white-washing the sepulcher that’s full of dead men’s bones.

Inside I’ve got to think—that’s the INWARD.

The OUTWARD is—I am then an obedient child and I don’t express it by yielding to my lower passions. I control it.

You want a great illustration of that? Daniel.

“Daniel purposed in his heart.” Isn’t that great?

Everybody around was supposed to eat the diet. Daniel purposed in his heart that he wasn’t going to have anything to do with that. And he asked for an opportunity not to. And God blessed him.

God has always blessed the person of conviction who is walking with God.

Nehemiah said “So did not I! It might have been alright for everybody else but I didn’t do it! I didn’t go along with that! It’s not right. So did not I.”

Is there anything in your life right now that you can think of that you made a decision that cost you a whole bunch but you knew it was the right decision because God had led you to that and you went ahead and took a stand. How did it make you feel?

Oh, I mean that well of joy just bubbled up inside.

Anytime a person does the right thing, what's the result? Joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Woo! I'm excited! And the wellspring of salvation inside just wells up and the Spirit of God says "Praise the Father! He got the message!"

It always happens with obedience and conviction. You see, most of us are kind of like moral chameleons. We gather our color from the last environment we crawled across.

I tell kids that I'm talking to "Do you want to be a chameleon or a crocodile?" Nobody argues with a crocodile. Chameleons take their color from wherever they go.

You want to be a thermostat or a thermometer? A thermometer only registers the social climate. A thermostat determines it. There's the choice.

He says: "As obedient children, don't be conformed."

Listen to Paul telling Timothy in:

1 Timothy 6:11-12

But as for you men of God, shun all this. Aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

David Wilkerson, just after he wrote *The Cross and the Switchblade* wrote another book called *Purple Violet Squish*. And in that little book he says this:

If being square means not taking drugs, not dressing in kookie clothes, not selling your body to the highest bidder nor running away from the responsibilities and problems of life, then I pray God give us more squares. Think square—able, bright, clean, efficient, faithful, good, honest, industrious, just, kind, loving, mannerly, noble, obedient, patriotic, qualified, respectful, strong, truthful, understanding, victorious, worshipping, exceptional, yourself, zealous. Think square, and you'll never run in circles.
(source unknown)

That's what he's trying to say.

Verse 15.

v. 15 but according to the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct;

Now you see where he's going?

In verse 14 we talk about the negative—that's what you've got to do. You've got to be obedient. You've got to deny your passions. So in verse 15—on the positive—you're going to be holy because He's holy. And that's a process. You've got to gird up the loins of your mind before you're going to be holy.

You can't sit here and get a buzz and make a decision and be holy. It's going to come as a result of right thinking. It's got to be a total reprogramming of the mental part of it in order for genuine Christianity to result.

Holiness is what He wants and that's what we're shooting for.

And he uses a verse of scripture—verse 16.

v. 16 because it has been written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Leviticus 11:44

I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground.

v. 17 If you are calling upon as Father the one who is judging impartially according to each individual's work, live in fear the time of your stay here in a strange land;

Now he's bring it one step further. He's saying "Another thing I ought to tell you is, you're going to be held accountable for the way you live and believe."

It's not only God's saying "be holy for I am holy" but I can tell you there's a day of accountability coming and we're going to be held accountable for that at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And that's a great motivating factor.

Now verse 18.

v. 18 knowing that not with perishable things as silver or gold were you ransomed from your futile ways of life inherited from your forefathers,

Now that's the NEGATIVE. It wasn't the "perishable things as silver or gold" that purchased our salvation. No, it's POSITIVE.

v. 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish and without spot.

It wasn't money, it was BLOOD.

It was the blood of Jesus Christ who loved You that purchased your redemption and mine on Calvary's Cross when He paid that costly price of shedding His own blood.

Verse 20.

v. 20 Who indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake

What does that tell you? That tells you that Peter knows he's the Son of God because this was all "foreordained before the foundation of the world."

He is ETERNAL. He is indeed the Son of God and He has been in existence before creation—the eternal Son of God.

v. 21 who through Him are believers in God, the one who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God.

"who through Him [Christians, Christ] are believers in God, the one who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, [What?] so that your faith and hope might be in God."

Now the Father "raised Him from the dead."

That's the greatest affirmation that God the Father would satisfy with what Jesus Christ had done because if He was not able, He'd have left Him in the grave. He "raised Him from the

dead.” He satisfied with the blood sacrifice that He made so that salvation is offered.

Now catch a good hold on the next one—verse 22.

v. 22 Having purified your souls by means of your obedience to the truth unto genuine (unhypocritical) love of the brethren, love one another from the heart earnestly,

You’ve purified your soul, how? By “your obedience to the truth”! And that’s how it happens. The FOCUS is on the Word of God.

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7)

Then fill that mind and program that mind with the Word of Truth! Then life will change and holiness will result! That’s what Peter’s telling us here in these verses.

You’ve “purified your souls.” And how do you tell it? You tell it by something so simple—in earnest, fervent, genuine love of the brethren.

I was sitting in the room this morning, studying after getting back from a little escapade down the hill. And I was telling Pearl, I said “You know, that’s the most healthy thing I can hear. There are couples laughing in fellowship already.” It’s a sign of the fact that the Spirit of God is at work.

“By this shall all men know that you’re my disciples with your love for one another.” (John 13:35)

And if what? If you love them from the heart fervently.

If there’s one thing Peter had a problem with, it was love!

The one time when Jesus said this—He said “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, If you love one another.” (John 13:35)

What does Peter say right after that? He says: “Lord, where are you going?”

You know he missed it!

So why is it that on the shores of the Sea of Galilee Jesus has to say to him again “Peter, do you love me?”

Flowing out of the genuine love for Jesus Christ will be a fervent love, a sacrificial love of your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Do you have those warm fuzzies this morning for each other? Is there that intense commitment to one another that you’re saying “We’re traveling in the same direction, let’s lock up and keep going!” That’s an indication, a fact that a good work is going on in your life.

When Jesus looked down through His great telescope upon the church of Ephesus, He says “I’ve got something against you. You left your first love.

That fervent, dynamic love that should have been a part and process of your life.

“Having purified your souls by means of your obedience to the truth unto genuine (unhypocritical) love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently,”

Alright, verse 23.

v. 23 having been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding Word of God.

“having been”—What? There it is. Isn’t that something? Had it up there earlier and now we’ve got it again.

“having been born again”—do you think it’s getting to us? You see, he’s putting the focus where it is.

“having been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable, [How?] through the living and abiding Word of God.”

Not the experience! The “Word of God” convicts the heart like a two-edged sword—piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. And as a result of the word of God doing its work in their lives, we then respond.

It’s not perishable that produces human life. It’s imperishable

seed that produces eternal life. And that seed as he sees it is the “Word of God.”

Verse 24. When you’re talking about “perishable seed” he says:

v. 24 For, “All flesh is as grass, and all its glory as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,

That’s all that you can get from physical life.

v. 25 but the Word of the Lord is abiding forever.” And this is the word of good news which was preached unto you.

“‘but the Word of the Lord is abiding forever.’—[There’s your context you see]—“And this is the word of good news which was preached unto you.”

Look at these last three verses. The tragedy of chapter divisions is once again witnessed here.

2:v. 1 Wherefore, having put away all malice and all deceit and pretenses and envies and all slanderings,

Why does he mention FIVE UGLY WORDS like that? You see, those are the five ugly words that come out when you don’t think right.

When you're thinking wrong inside you've got a problem. And out of it comes those ugly words:

1. "malice"—the spirit that desires to hurt somebody.
2. guile [deceit]—Webster's dictionary describes it as being deceitful or cunning. That's the inward disposition. You don't know that. That's inside somebody.
3. hypocrisy—But the way you see it is by hypocrisy. That's the outward manifestation of it. It's blowing a lot of smoke. It's saying a lot of pious and spiritual talk without really having any meaning behind it.
4. [envies]
5. evil speakings [slandering]—the slandering of individuals with whom you don't agree. And these words are there.

He says: "having put away." That is the AORIST TENSE. That's a once for all thing.

What are these verses telling you about? They're telling you that in the process of growth, there must be periods and times of surgery in our lives.

Now if you've been sitting here through this session this morning and you've been thinking about somebody else and

not you, I hurt for you. Because if you're truly teachable and you're truly walking with God you're thinking about "what is God saying to me about what's in my life right now that needs to be cut out of it?"

To Jacob he had to turn over his Benjamin.

To Abram he had to turn over his Isaac.

Paul says: "Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of this flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1)

What is it right now, as you pray the prayer of the psalmist David: "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psalm 139:23), that the Spirit's got His hand on it right now.

Is it a habit? Is it a temper? Is it a critical spirit? Is it an arrogant, prideful stance and lifestyle like "This is for everybody else and not for me"?

You see, the secret to spiritual growth is clearing the clutter out of our lives so we can have an appetite.

How can you tell when somebody's sick? They don't want to eat and are not hungry. That's the reason a lot of Christians are spiritually sick. They're not hungry. They can't stand to even take time in the Word of God.

But here a true Christian experience results in verse 2.

After those NEGATIVE things are cut out, there is a spiritual framework for spiritual health which means growth to Christlikeness!

v. 2 like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, in order that by it you may grow up in salvation,

“like newborn babes [because I’ve experienced the new birth!] long for the pure spiritual milk, in order that by it you may grow up in salvation,”

What is that “spiritual milk”?

The WORD of God.

Get tough and start growing.

Do you have an appetite for the Word? Is it an insatiable desire to know it?

Paul when he writes to the Corinthians says: “I had to write to you like little babies because you couldn’t accept it. You’re still living in the flesh and not in spirit.”

That means they didn’t have an appetite—a desire for the Word of God.

I've had such a neat time on tour this year. I had some great experiences.

I had a man sitting in the audience who came to know Jesus one night. He came up afterwards. "Sixty-four years he served in the church and I thought I was a Christian! Today you spoke to me. And I honestly cried."

I had three more weeks with that guy. He bought half of the tapes and listened to most of them during those three weeks.

He says "I can understand it."

All he wants is the tape and the Word of God! He listens and listens and listens!

That's not the teacher. It's a healthy appetite to the Word God. And I'm saying "Praise God for that man who is Christ."

I have an Englishman at the congregation at Hide-a-way. I baptized him a few weeks. Oh what a joy. Mister Agnostic. Wouldn't even allow Mark to pray with him in the name of Jesus at the hospital when he was sick with a heart problem.

His life, one Sunday morning, as I was preaching and teaching—he describes it this way: "It was like the focus on a camera. All of a sudden when I looked through the lens, I saw Jesus perfectly clear."

He says "I ran to the back door. I want to be baptized right now."

I said "We've got to talk about this."

I went over. Yes, that morning he came to know Jesus and experienced the new birth.

You know, I meet with that guy once a week for an hour. And the guy's already got 3 verses memorized. And he's reading through the one year Bible. And it's a tremendous change!

Now, it's no credit to teaching. But it tells you something about the person. He's got an appetite. And if you're sitting here as a believer and you've been a believer for a long time and you're not very hungry, you better get back to verse 1 and find out what it is.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart."

You can't stand the thought of going to glory spiritually sick!

Oh, I want to go to glory with my Bible in my hand, just having read it and the Father says "Come on to the house!" That's the way I want to go! With running shoes on, meditating on some truth at the moment I walk into the presence of Him.

"like newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,"

Why?

v. 3 for you tasted that the Lord is loving (kind, benevolent).

Does He know that? Oh wow!

The Lord put up with him for three years and then put up with his denial and here as he looks back on it he says “The Lord’s been gracious and good to me! So I need to focus on His word and get to know Him better and better.”

What’s our second pattern for progress? Just in case you missed it, it was in the first verse and in the next to the last one.

Get tough. Gird up the loins of your mind and secondly, start growing. And that only happens by a healthy intake of the Word of God on a regular basis.

Now I’ve got 5 observations I got out of that. I’m going to let you go.

#1: Mental disciple is one of the keys to spiritual progress.

Mental disciple is one of the keys to spiritual progress.

#2: Obedience to the Word produces holiness of character.

Obedience to the Word produces holiness of character.

#3: I kind of put it all together—We are redeemed from sin by blood to holiness.

There it is. We are redeemed from sin by blood—not silver and gold—to holiness. That's the result.

#4: Genuine love is a manifestation of the obedient heart.

Check your love thermometer then check your obedience.

And my last one:

#5: Growth comes from an intake of the Word of God.

Growth comes from an intake of the Word of God. Just take it in.

I jotted down in big red letters this morning when I went over my study one more time before I came to teach you:

Right thinking and an appetite for the Word are the two and vital ingredients in growth.

Right thinking and appetite for the Word of God are the two vital ingredients in growth.

Don't let anybody tell you anything else. That's biblical.

Right thinking and an appetite for the Word are the two vital ingredients for growth.

Father, we realize that the Spirit of God has quit preachin' and gone to meddlin' in our lives this morning. Lord, we realize that we are guilty. We've thought wrong thoughts and as a result, we have reaped what we've sown. Please forgive us. Help us with the apostle Paul, who had a lot to forget too, to forget those things which are behind and press toward those things which are in front that we might know Christ in the power of His resurrection and fellowship with His [can't understand] that we might press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Help us to run well. Father I pray that since right thinking and an appetite for the Word of God are the key ingredients for growth, we'll start testing our spiritual lives against what the Word of God says. And Father instead of trying to be holy, to deal with the things that produce holiness and then see the result. Thanks Father for letting us have these moments together today and singing hymns and being ministered to in music, for our time in the Word. May it enrich us now as we celebrate together the rest of this day. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

PATTERN NUMBER TWO – GET TOUGH AND START GROWING **– 1 PETER 1:13-2:3**

KEY VERSES 1:13 & 2:2

v.13 Wherefore, when you have girded the loins of your mind, be well-balanced, set your hope fully upon the grace that is being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

v.14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

v.15 but according to the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct;

v.16 because it has been written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

v.17 If you are calling upon as Father the one who is judging impartially according to each individual’s work, live in fear the time of your stay here in a strange land;

v.18 knowing that not with perishable things as silver or gold were you ransomed from your futile ways of life inherited from your forefathers,

v.19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish and without spot.

v.20 Who indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake

v.21 who through Him are believers in God, the one who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God.

v.22 Having purified your souls by means of your obedience to the truth unto genuine (unhypocritical) love of the brethren, love one another from the heart earnestly,

v.23 having been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding Word of God.

v.24 For, “All flesh is as grass, and all its glory as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,

v.25 but the Word of the Lord is abiding forever.” And this is the word of good news which was preached unto you.

2:v. 1 Wherefore, having put away all malice and all deceit and pretenses and envies and all slanderings,

v. 2 like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, in order that by it you may grow up in salvation,

v. 3 for you tasted that the Lord is loving (kind, benevolent).

NOTES

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QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Peter 1:13-2:3 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What two things does Peter ask us to do in verse 13?

3. What does Peter ask us to do in verse 15? And why in verse 16?

4. How are we supposed to live in verse 17?

5. What makes it possible for us to have a relationship to God, according to verse 19?

6. What does Peter ask us to do in verse 22?

7. What are we asked to put away in chapter 2:1?

8. Why does Peter want us to drink the milk of the Word in chapter 2:2?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Mental discipline is one of the keys to spiritual progress.

LESSON #2: Obedience to the Word produces holiness of character.

LESSON #3: We are redeemed from sin by blood to holiness.

LESSON #4: Genuine love is a manifestation of the obedient heart.

LESSON #5: Growth comes from an intake of the Word.

LESSON #6: Right thinking and an appetite for the Word are two vital ingredients in growth.