

“Fervent Love of the Brethren”

Text: 1 Peter 1:22-25 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to remind Christians that when they are in the midst of suffering, they need to focus their energies on maintaining healthy Christian community.

Proposition: God wants you to cultivate loving Christian relationships.

Interrogative: How can we do that?

Truth 1: We need to cultivate healthy Christian community: 1:22 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently...”

Details:

- **The command:** “See that ye love one another...”
- **The basis of this command:** “Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...”
- **The enabling to follow-through with the command:** “Through the Spirit...”
- **The purpose of the command:** “Unto unfeigned love of the brethren...”
- **The quality of the command:** “Love one another with a pure heart fervently...”
 - **“Unfeigned:”** Sincere/genuine
 - **“Pure heart:”** Undivided
 - **“Fervently:”** Intensely

Practical Implications:

- **Christians under pressure need to be reminded of their responsibility to love one another, because pressure tends to stir up fleshly responses toward those closest to them: James 4:1** “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?”
- **Christians under pressure need to be reminded that they need the church and the church needs them: Hebrews 10:24-25** “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching...”
- **Christians under pressure need to be reminded of the practical means that God uses to bring about godly responses:** There is a process and there are tools that God uses in the process to bring each of us into spiritual maturity.

Truth 2: Our new nature makes this community possible: 1:23 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible...”

Details:

- **We have new life in Christ:** “Being born again...”

- **This new life is without corruption:** “Incorruptible seed...”

Implications:

- **Before our conversion to Christ, we are spiritually dead and live our lives dominated by our fleshly passions. We live as slaves to sin.**
- **But now in Christ, we as new creatures in Christ, who still experience temptation, but have the power because we are new creatures in Christ to overcome sin and say no to fleshly lusts which war against our souls. Galatians 5:13-18, 24** “Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law... And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts...”

Truth 3: The ministry of the word is the primary tool God uses to develop this community:

23-25 “By the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you...”

Details:

- **God’s word has the power to bring us from death to life:** “By the word...”
- **God’s word is alive:** “Liveth...”
- **God’s word transcends time and cultures:** “Abideth forever...endureth forever...”
- **God’s word is contrasted with the temporary nature of people:** “All the glory of man as the flower of the grass...”
- **The same word that gives us life, is the word that sustains that life:** “This is the word...” The word that brought you to repentance and faith and that brought you to new life in Christ, is the same word that transforms each of us in the Christians community/local church.

Implications:

- God’s word needs to play a central role in our personal lives, because it is the primary means that He uses to stir up godly virtues.
- God’s word needs to play a central role in the life of the church, because it is the primary means that He uses to develop a vibrant, Christian community.
- The Spirit of God through the ministry of the word takes broken individuals and unites them in a local church, where together they can grow up together into spiritual maturity.
- We need the church and that need is exponentially compounded in times of crisis!

Conclusion: God wants us to cultivate a vibrant Christian community in this local church. One where people are being saved, disciplined, growing into Christ-likeness, developing spiritual disciplines, and finding the encouragement we need to press on in the Christian life even when we face severe persecution for our faith in Christ!