

Sunday August 1st 2010

Petros

Part Seven

1). 1Pe 1:22 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 ¶ because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever."* Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. 2:1 ¶ **Therefore**, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 ¶ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

a). Within the original manuscript for the letter we call 1 Peter there are no chapter breaks and no verse numbering. These are things that have been added in translation to help us more readily locate a particular section of scripture within any given book.

b). And so as we begin what is for us the second Chapter of our letter it is important that we see the flow of thought from the previous Chapter.

c). And what we find at the beginning of Chapter 2 is the word 'therefore', a word that we already know to mean, 'in view of the fact that', a word that takes us back to that which has immediately gone before it.

d). So, to recap then, to go back to where we finished last week – 'in view of the fact that', we have purified our souls in obeying the truth in sincere love of the brethren; 'in view of the fact that', we are to love one another fervently with a pure heart; 'in view of the fact that', we have been brought forth from above by incorruptible seed through the word of God which lives and abides forever; 'in view of the fact that', not only is our time upon the earth exceedingly short, but also Man's Day with all its cultural, artistic, scientific and technological accomplishments is but for a fleeting moment and like the flower of the grass will fall away; 'in view of the fact that the word of the Lord endures forever, the word concerning the overthrow of Man's Day and the establishment of Christ in His

coming Kingdom; ‘in view of the fact that’, that this is the very word that has been preached to us by the gospel; ‘in view of the fact that’, it is only that surrounding Christ and His Kingdom that will have any lasting value. Because of all of this we are given a strongly worded imperative - *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

e). The command here is that of ‘laying aside’ which speaks of a complete separation from, and in this is the same thought that we have seen in the command, 1Pe 1:15 *but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

f). Here in Chapter 2 however there are five particular things that the Holy Spirit sees fit to bring to our attention. Yes, we should be holy in all our conduct, but here, within the context of that we have just looked at, are five things that were pertinent to Peter’s readers then, just as they will be pertinent to us now.

g). We are then to separate ourselves, in the sense of a once and for all separation, from all malice, all deceit, all hypocrisy, all envy, and all evil speaking.

2). Malice = Greek – ‘kakia’ from ‘kakos’ = harm, ill will, wickedness

a). This word speaks of intentionally inflicting hurt or pain upon or against someone and in a broad sense encompasses everything that comes out of our sin nature, including our thoughts.

b). The way Paul uses the word here in Romans may be helpful to us – Ro 7:20 *Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil [kakos] is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

3). Deceit = Greek – ‘dolos’ = craftiness, to catch with bait

a). This takes us to a deliberate and calculated cunning in order to achieve an ungodly end. This can cover anything from arranging a situation so as to achieve a desired result, to self delusion, to the manipulation of the saints.

b). Two other uses of the word will help us with this.

c). Jas 1:14 *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.*[dolos]

d). 2Pe 2:18 *For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure [dolos] through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.*

4). Hypocrisy = Greek – ‘hupokrisis’ = acting under a feigned part

a). Our word that we transliterate as hypocrisy is one we had looked at in some detail last week; it is a word whose action is premeditated. There is a deliberate choice to assume a particular part for the purpose of hiding true intent behind a mask that says something different.

b). Jesus’ encounter with the scribes and Pharisees provides an excellent example - Mr 12:14 *When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? 15 "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it."*

5). Envy = Greek – ‘phthonos’ = ill-will (as detraction), i.e. jealousy (spite):--envy.

a). This word is not wishing that we had something that someone else has, rather it implies a vicious spitefulness that looks to the ill-will of its subject.

b). Again the life of Christ provides an excellent example –
Mt 27:17 *Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.[phthonos]*

6). Evil speaking = Greek – ‘katalalia’ = defamation:--backbiting,

a). This is about speaking down a person, speaking against them so that they will be seen in a negative light.

b). This word is used only twice in the NT, here in 1 Peter and to describe the church in Corinth in - 2Co 12:20 *For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, [katalalia] whisperings, conceits, tumults;*

c). The use of a related word in Galatians would show us the intensity of this action - Ga 5:15 *But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!*

7). Now we have spent some time on these words as the words describe actions that we have been commanded to totally separate ourselves from and are therefore important for us to understand.

a). And as we consider each of these we will realize that each begins in our mind through choice and if we choose to engage in any of the actions described here then we will have chosen to lay aside the word of God that lives and abides

forever thereby not allowing the incorruptible seed that has been planted in us to produce fruit.

b). All of these words describe actions of the flesh and are attributes adopted by the world. But we have been delivered from this as we saw last week – 1Pe 1:13 ¶ *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." 17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

c). We are not to be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of our mind and it is the word of God alone who is able to bring about that transformation.

d). Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

e). The Holy Spirit through James says we are first to lay aside something and then receive something, which if implemented will result in the salvation of our soul.

f). And this is exactly the same thing that the Holy Spirit says through Peter, firstly we are to lay aside and then we are to desire, which if implemented will result in the salvation of the soul - 1Pe 2:1 ¶ *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, [up to your salvation]*

8). The final phrase in brackets at the end of v2 does not appear in our translation, but would be helpful for us to put in so as to grasp the full intent of these verses. It would be a similar thought to that in - Php 2:12 ¶ *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*

a). What we find in 1 Peter 2:2 is a metaphor rather than a literal description. The recipients of Peter's letter were not 'babes in Christ', nor were they only just beginning on their journey to spiritual maturity. Rather we firstly see placed in juxtaposition the worldly wise attributes of v1 with the innocence of a newborn babe in v2. When it comes to the manifestation of sin as detailed in the first verse we should be as far removed from the deliberate, calculated participation in these as would a baby newly from its mother's womb. The Lord's words recorded in

Matthew would offer a similar thought - Mt 18:3 *and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

b). And to continue with the metaphor, the newborn babe, if it is to grow, needs the unadulterated milk of its mother, and so it would be for us – we need the unadulterated word of God if we are to be properly nourished so as to grow up to salvation, the salvation of the soul.

c). The word translated ‘pure’ here - *desire the pure milk of the word* is Pure = Greek – ‘*adolos*’ = Unadulterated

d). This is the same word we saw earlier, ‘*dolos*’ that was translated deceit, with the Greek letter ‘*a*’ on the front which makes it mean the opposite of what it meant before. There is therefore no deceitfulness in the word of God, there is no craftiness, it is in no sense manipulative, just a presentation of incorruptible truth.

e). All the philosophies of man and all the greatest thoughts of the greatest writers are tainted with deceit as they are the product of man’s wisdom, but not so the word of God - 1Co 3:19 *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness";*

1Co 2:13 *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

f). It is then the unadulterated truth that we need, and we must be on our guard to compare spiritual things with spiritual, as the word of God can be manipulated by someone deliberately mishandling it - 2Pe 3:16 *as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*

g). Now within the context of our metaphor the ‘pure milk of the word’ is not a reference to the milk in - Heb 5:13 *For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

No, it is simply a metaphor pointing to that unadulterated word in all its solid form that is able to save our souls.

h). And our scripture says we are to desire this. It is to be an intense desire, an overwhelming longing for. There is a hunger implied in this that is way beyond a casual interest.

i). And that which stands in the way of having such a desire as this for the unadulterated word is, amongst other things, the five carnal attributes that are listed in v1 – all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking. And this should of course be fairly obvious – we can’t fill our minds and hearts with that

which is contrary to the word of God and at the same time have a passion for that same word which we have chosen to reject. There must be a laying aside first and then the passion may follow.

9). The opening 3 verses of Chapter 2 then end with this - 1Pe 2:3 *if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

a). The word 'if' here we should understand in the same way that we saw it used in Chapter 1, and so we can understand it here as, 'since you indeed have tasted...' or 'if you indeed are those [which you are] who have tasted...'. And the word, 'tasted' continues to draw on the metaphor of v2, the word literally meaning to taste or to eat. This is not literal of course, but does refer to personal experience. It is our experience as we have 'fed' upon the word that the Lord is gracious.

b). Gracious = Greek – 'chrestos' = employed, i.e. (by implication) useful (in manner or morals):--better, easy, good(-ness), gracious, kind.

c). The way this word is used elsewhere in scripture gives the idea of excellence.

d). A scripture akin to this would be - Heb 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance,*

e). Here of course in Hebrews we have a warning for those who have tasted the heavenly gift and the good word of God and the powers of the age to come should they fall away.

f). And although our scripture from Chapter 2 v3 is apart from any warning we could see how those to whom Peter writes, having tasted that the Lord is gracious, could then fall away by not putting aside, all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking and therefore not desiring the pure milk of the word.

g). And so to bring all of this together, we need to lay aside these 5 worldly attributes and then like a newborn babe we are come to the all sufficient God to feast upon the nourishment He provides through His word having already tasted how excellent it is, so that we can grow up to the salvation of the soul. The imagery in the metaphor used in these verses, that of newborn babes desiring pure milk contains echoes of one of the names of God in the OT scriptures, where on many occasions He is known as 'El Shaddai', which is most often translated, 'Almighty God'.

h). The first use of this we find when God changes Abram's name to Abraham - Ge 17:1 ¶ *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God [El Shaddai]; walk before Me and be blameless.*

i). Now what is interesting in this for us is that Shaddai comes from the Hebrew word, 'shad' which means breast and could be translated as 'many breasted' in the sense of being all sufficient.

j). God is not female but His nature and character are such that He is all sufficient in the way a mother would be for her child. We can look at a great example of this found in Isaiah Chapter 66 within the context of God's restoration of Israel - Isa 66:9 *Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts [shad] of her consolations; that ye may milk out [Lit. to suck milk], and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. KJV*

k). And this in itself would echo an earlier chapter in Isaiah – Isa 28:9 ¶ *"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."*

l). In the scriptures then is the all sufficiency of God with respect to the salvation of the soul - 2Ti 3:15 *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

10). And so closing v3 with a focus on our experience of the excellence of God that we have tasted through the word, an all sufficiency that is who He is, so we come to another facet of His character in - 1Pe 2:4 ¶ *Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,*

a). Christ is in character a Living Stone, dependable, reliable, immovable, constant and to the second person of the Trinity we continue to come – Jas 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

b). The word translated 'stone' here is neither petros, nor petra, with which we are familiar, but the word, 'lithos' = apparently a primary word; a stone (literally or figuratively):--(mill-, stumbling-)stone.

c). And this would be an appropriate word to use here as Christ did not come to the earth as the Petra, that will be reserved for the time of the Kingdom, but He came in the form of a man and there are a number of occasions when the word

lithos is used in respect of human beings, two examples of which are - Mt 3:9 *"and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones [lithos].*

d). And the next verse in 2 Peter 2 - 1Pe 2:5 *you also, as living stones[lithos]*

e). Now Christ as the 'lithos' came to Israel as their Messiah and was of course rejected by the nation. Contained in the Greek word translated, 'rejected' is the idea of putting to the test in order to come to a conclusion. So what we realize then is that Christ did not meet the requirements that national Israel looked for in their Messiah therefore they rejected Him.

f). And here we have another of those comparisons as Christ is rejected by men, but is chosen by God. The word chosen is not a verb but a noun here which takes us back to Him having been foreordained from the foundation of the world to fulfill this role. He is the One that God has chosen. He is also described as precious, He is dear to God as we would expect.

g). And His choice by God would be better translated, 'the chosen One in the sight of God'.

h). Again another poignant reminder that what man sees and what man values is completely at odds with God's perspective. It might be good for us to keep this in mind.

11). 1Pe 2:5 *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

a). We are also described as living stones and the exact same words are used here to describe us as were used to describe Christ. And this is really not that surprising as the faithfully obedient Christian in pursuit of the Kingdom would match this description in - Ga 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

b). Therefore for those who are walking according to the spirit and not according to the flesh, these 'stones' are being built into a spiritual house. It is a spiritual house, a structure that lives, is led and is directed by the Spirit, and is made up of faithfully obedient seekers of the Kingdom from throughout this dispensation.

c). The living stones who are being built up a spiritual house are also to be a holy, a separated, priesthood for the purpose of offering up spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Now we are not priests yet, but our present action of separation from in order to offer sacrifices that can only come out of dying to self and walking in the Spirit - Ro 12:1 ¶ *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

d). This present action if we continue steadfast in it will have a future fulfillment at the Judgment Seat when we become King/Priests to our God. 1Pe 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, [kingly priests]* Re 1:6 *and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

e). And these sacrifices are acceptable to God. The word acceptable in the original language means a good deal more than our English word would suggest – it literally means to receive to one's self with pleasure.

f). God then does not just accept the sacrifices we make through the spirit, but receives them with pleasure; and no wonder of it really as in the death of our flesh and in our walking in the Spirit is the very image of the One who is His Son in whom He is well pleased. We are like a quarry full of living stones being shaped and fit together by the Spirit through the word and held in place with the mortar of love.

g). Ro 8:29 ¶ *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

h). Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

12). 1Pe 2:6 *Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*

a). And our scripture continues, 'therefore', in view of the fact that we have just seen that Christ is a Living Stone rejected by men but chosen by God, it is also contained in the Scripture.....

b). Contained = Greek – 'periecho' = to hold all around

c). Central then to the content of scripture is the fact that God has laid in Zion a chief cornerstone, the foundation upon which all else is to be built. This cornerstone is Christ, and he who believes on Him – who puts his faith fully in the grace that is to be brought to him at the revelation of Jesus Christ and therefore conducts his life accordingly, will be no means be put to shame – will not be deceived or defeated in his hope.

d). It is not possible to do this and then fall short of the salvation of the soul.

e). What an encouragement, what a motivation – and here we will continue next time if the Lord is willing.