

Living as Obedient Children

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[0 : 00] Let me pray. Our Father in heaven, thank you for your word. We do pray this morning that as we hear you speak, you would be working in our hearts and our minds by your spirit to bring us to obedience to your Son, that we might live in ways which please you and honour you and so speak of your greatness in this world.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. 1 Peter chapter 1, picking up at verse 13. And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without a blemish or spot.

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for sincere love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 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.

[2 : 20] And this word is the word, good news, that was preached to you. So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you've tasted that the Lord is good.

Well, I wonder if you've ever tasted a time of feeling like you were in a place where you were really loved, where you really belonged. It may have been with a group of mates, you're out in the fishing boat and everyone's yahooing and cheering because you're catching fish together.

It may have been on the sporting team, when everyone's in solidarity on about winning the game. It may be in your family where you just know that everyone's for you, right?

A place where you know that others would do anything for you, support, encourage you, miss you. A place where you felt the love. I've got a mate who was fishing off the rocks one day, and the water was going on, and he said, I'd jump in there to save you, Roy.

That's nice, isn't it? I don't want to fall in there ever, but anyway, there you go. I felt the love. Now, it's a love like that, but even better, which is a defining quality of a church, of any church, of every church, and so is and should be and must continue to be of our church.

[3 : 58] And the thing is, the way you get it is not by expecting others to do the loving, right? It doesn't work that way.

The way it works is by doing the loving yourself. That's how it works. Even if it isn't returned. Now, you and I are members of a particular minority group, tribe, nation, culture.

And if we don't love each other, who will? See, Christians are now the away team at the football match.

You know what the away team gets? They get the second rate sort of change rooms. They're the ones who are spat on as they come through the entrance to the football field. Christians are now not the good ones, but actually the baddies, the bad guys in the eyes of most of the world because we don't want to actually endorse what they want to endorse.

And yet, we have been called, chosen, destined to be members of God's holy family by no one less than God himself. We're a nation, a people group like no other on earth.

[5 : 16] We have tasted and we have experienced that the Lord is good. For some, that's more recent than for others. Sadly, some of us may have forgotten the reality of how good it is to have tasted of the Lord.

At one level, being here in Australia, being born in Australia and enjoying being in this land is tasting that the Lord is good, really. It's the fruit of Western society based largely on Christian values.

But it's much more personal than that. Tasting that the Lord is good is enjoying being one of God's people, knowing the great hope of glory, being rescued from the futile dog-eat-dog world we live in, rescued from a world of distorted relationships, rescued from a world where everything is sort of out to get you.

I know of someone who became a Christian a while ago now, a long time ago, and this rescue from the world and this lifestyle they were in brought such joy to them that they had a sore jaw from smiling so much.

Like a wedding couple on the wedding day doing a lot of smiling for the camera. Two weeks of smiling just realising how good it was having tasted how good it is to one of God's people.

[6 : 37] Now, what we have today in God's Word is a manifesto of what we, the people of God, have been born again into the living hope that we're on about and how we're to go about living as God's people in it.

See, we're aliens in exile, pick it up there in verse 13, therefore. Now, therefore in verse 13 means we need to see what it's there for, right? That's why it's there.

So what comes before, we learnt last week that what we've learnt is that Peter's writing to a group of people who are aliens in exile, that is, not Martians on the moon or Mars, but people who are forgiven but who are foreigners, mostly Jewish Christians who are not living in their promised land.

That's who we're writing to. Away from Israel but more than that, not yet coming to the eternal perfect kingdom of God. They're still waiting for that to come. They are elect exiles, that is, they're chosen to be his people from amongst other people that have been chosen into this family and they are living as refugees.

Their true homeland is somewhere else. Where they live now is not for sure for eternity. And like them, we also are the people of God.

[7 : 55] God has caused us to be born again, we've been saved by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus and brought by God's precious Son into this kingdom. And so we are refugees in a foreign land, enduring various trials back in chapter 1 verse 6.

These trials actually define our faith, refine our faith and pure, burn off the things in our faith, make us more like the Lord Jesus. And these trials enrich us, prove our faith is genuine, remind us that our faith is much more valuable than gold, which then brings us to verse 13.

So therefore, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We'd have hope in the grace that's to be revealed, verse 13.

God's people are aliens in exile and need hope. Hope is something beyond the current circumstance and hope's a major theme of 1 Peter, the dominant theme we saw last week.

Hope is what you need when you're an alien, when you're a foreigner, when you're a refugee, living in exile and the trials and the suffering come upon you. The phrase in verse 13 telling us to set our hope and what's to come is so strange in the original language that it takes a lot of work to communicate what it means but in trying to communicate what it means it loses a whole lot of weight that comes with the Old Testament background that goes with it.

[9 : 28] So let me try and help you with it, verse 13, a bit more. Literally it goes something like this. You ready for it? Therefore, see how crazy this sounds, right? Girding up the loins of your minds for action and being sober-minded, right?

Girding up the loins of your mind for action. Now there's significant Old Testament occasion that Peter has in mind.

Do you know what it is? Well it's this. On the night before the Exodus in Exodus chapter 12 the people were told to gird up their garments right?

And then tuck them into their belts so something like this right? So they could lift them up off their legs like that so that they could run fast they could move quickly unhindered. And it was about to happen they were about to be saved they were about to leave Egypt where they were sojourning and to be rescued from Egypt and then to be sojourners again on the way to their promised land.

They were about to become pilgrims on a journey home and they had to trust God that he would actually save them that he would rescue them and that trust required action.

[10 : 54] They showed their trust by their obedience to God's word doing what he asked them to do they were to sacrifice a lamb put his blood over the doorway so that they'd be spared from the destruction of their firstborn child when God passed over Egypt then they'd be saved.

They had to have faith in God that he would save them that night from the destruction coming. They had to take action follow God's instructions or else they too would have ended up like the firstborn people of Egypt the same fate of the Egyptians.

And they can look back now can't they on what God had done in the last nine plagues and go yeah yeah God has been pretty powerful in action here and trust that he would save them from the suffering that was coming upon Egypt but that trust required action.

And so here Peter is telling us to live in the same way knowing that our salvation is ever so close our rescue from the current situation in life is coming and we are to trust God that he will save us that he will rescue us from the slavery in Egypt right from our current situation in the world whatever that is and in Peter's day that was marked by all kinds of trials particularly bad trials we hear about in a few weeks time and we need to think rightly right we need to think clearly we need to think soberly and we need our minds to calmly and confidently be set on the hope of the grace the generosity the kindness of God to come as the people of Israel had to do that when they were sojourners in Egypt and then sojourners in the wilderness when Jesus Christ is revealed on that last day we're going to be showered with grace showered with mercy showered with kindness incredible kindness we will be rescued from the wrath to come on the world that day we will be given new bodies on that day that are imperishable we will be given access into the very presence and throne room of

God and be there with him and the countless other millions of people from all time and all ages praising the land the one we praising God who made we'll be there with God who created the heavens and the earth in unapproachable life but there with him and we won't die we might be flat in our face worshipping him but we won't die our hope is in something far far bigger than this world can ever deliver our hope our trust trust is in the grace of God that we'll receive at the revelation of Jesus Christ when we see him face to face when the clouds are rolled up like a scroll I've got a book called hope beyond cure it's a book particularly written for people who have been diagnosed with cancer for that particular trial that comes to many there's hope beyond this world so in the meanwhile right we are told then to be holiness to be holy sorry holiness in the light of the grace to be revealed see there in verse 14 to 16 as obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance but as he called you is holy you also be holy in all your conduct since it's written you shall be holy for I am holy as obedient children right not disobedient children we're to be holy in the light of the grace to be revealed not disobedient like the people of

[14 : 51] Israel were continually disobedient to the one who saved them the former way of life and ignorance of God and his that way of living is over ignorance resulted in a wayward destructive lifestyle now that we are mindful of him right enlightened by having him revealed to us the Lord Jesus we are to live differently in our conduct not just some of our conduct though in all our conduct in the midst of trials there is an appropriate way to live now our trials will never give us an excuse for ungodliness they did not give us a free past to be ungodly when trials come our whole way of life is to be set aside to God like God and the reason we'd be like God you shall be holy for I am holy that's a repeated command for the people of

God in the book of Leviticus 11 Leviticus 19 Leviticus 20 be holy because I the Lord your God am holy because the one who saves us is holy we're part of his family we have the family likeness like God himself demonstrating that we're one of God's people he's caused to be born again and we live in fear in the light of our ransom in the light of us being rescued and saved if God is our father which he is he's ransomed us he's brought us back at incredible great cost himself then remember he's also the one who will judge and judge justly he's one who judges impartially there's a rightness right in fearing him how we live matters it really does knowing that God will judge the way we live means we'll not presume upon forgiveness can't live like that it means that we know that he notices the disobedience and it's a present judgment not a final judgment not a final condemnation but a present disciplining which is appropriate having a right fear of

God is consistent with loving him as I take it we do it's a holy concern and fear of offending the Lord our God who saved us which leads to a good conscience in obeying him which is evidence of the Holy Spirit that's at work in us we remember that God suffered the rebellion of his people after they were saved after they were rescued from Egypt and he didn't let them go unpunished for it there are consequences for sin and while we're in this time of exile strangers and sojourners we are to live with an appropriate fear of God and not presume upon his grace and kindness because we're told in other parts of the Bible like Hebrews 12 that our

God is a consuming fire sometimes I am too quick to excuse my sin and sometimes I think we are too quick to excuse our sin and presume upon the grace of God we live in fear of God's impartial judgment in the light of the length that he went to save us it wasn't a light thing for God to rescue us it wasn't the death of a bull or a goat it wasn't gold or silver money not even a billion dollars to rescue us it was the cost of his one and only son that was the ransom price his perfect son who was the lamb of God like a lamb of God without blemish without spoil without stain without anything see verse 19 the precious blood of

Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot and notice again how this was all in accordance with God's plan of God from before the beginning of time verse 20 he was foreknown before the foundation of the world it wasn't plan B for God for his son to die for me and for you it was always God's plan A it wasn't a divine afterthought God had planned our redemption before the beginning of time it's through God the son Jesus that we believe in God the father who raised Jesus from the dead and it's God the father who gave glory to Jesus glorifying him as ruler and judge of the kingdom of God and so now that our faith and our hope are in

[20 : 31] God and rightly so for there's no one else to put our faith and trust in there's no other name in heaven and earth by which we must be saved so now having been saved by obedience to the truth the truth that Jesus Lord there's an appropriate way to relate towards others in the faith and that is the way of love that's why we keep saying in our church here we love God we love his word we love his people that's us and we love the lost we love in the light of the purification we receive there verse 22 to 25 one of the key ways we will be known by God's people is by the way we love one another John chapter 13 verse 35 by this all people will know that you are my disciples if you love one another if there's one thing that can be never enough of in the Christian fellowship it's that of love of real deep pure genuine sincere love we are now a totally new people because we have been born again born anew and notice why we've been saved have a look with me this pick it up at verse 22 having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love love one another earnestly from a pure heart since you've been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable for the living and abiding word of

God one of the key reasons we have been saved is so that we can love one another with a sincere brotherly love a love that's literally not hypocritical it's without play acting it's not flattery it's not false motives God demonstrates his love for us in this while we're still sinners Christ died for us love is a verb not just an emotion and it's costly it's inconvenient I mean took Jesus to the cross brotherly love doesn't stand above and look down on someone thinking I'm better than you brotherly love is love that's blind to the other person's status in life

I'll say it again brotherly love is love that is blind to the other person's status in society those who receive salvation through faith in Christ Jesus we are all equal in God's sight saved sinners that's who we are and as it's been said by others I think Paul Tripp might have said this Christ is the head of his body the rest is body I don't stand above you I am in need of your prayer your affection your rebuke your encouragement and all of us need that we're all body that's who we are and notice that this is also a command of God here love one another earnestly from a pure heart earnestly is the idea of zealous and motivated it's a self-starting love it's something that goes beyond the present I look for places to love I have my eyes open my heart willing to serve it isn't a love that's doing the minimum you know

I just that'll do right but it's going the extra mile love that's what it is it's not just doing what might be required okay that'll satisfy but considering what is particularly needed now now we have people doing that every week here at church but let's keep doing so more and more and encourage those who do it amongst us and it's a pure heart without mixed motives right this is we've all got mixed motives in why we do what we do but it was with a pure heart right without mixed motives not loving because I want something from you not wanting to put you in debt to my love so that you owe me one love right remember that what is born naturally the flesh and blood and what is human dies and perishes but that which is born of eternal word of

God is imperishable and it's that word of truth that's brought us to life that living word of God that remains and lasts and firm and secure that word of God never perishes never dies in the drought never falls like the flower from the the jacaranda tree and is here for a couple of weeks then gone the good news of Jesus that he's raised from the dead and given eternal glory is the word that remains forever and that word is what was preached to you and to me and that's where we need to go on about preaching now for many of the people in this day this was not a new message for them right this was a message they'd heard up to 30 years earlier and it's a word that's been preached in every generation since and it's still been proclaimed today 2,000 years later so since we've been born again into this imperishable by this imperishable word of God we are to put away all behaviour that destroys that that love craves that which will promote the good things of God so put away verse 1 chapter 2 verse 1 it's clear that being

[26 : 55] God's people have been made pure by obedience to the truth require a lifestyle of truthfulness there's no place for malice deceit hypocrisy envy slander notice the word all all malice there's no place put away all malice now malice is far from loving it means being mean spirited or have a vicious attitude towards others wanting trouble to come their way that's malice deceit's the idea of taking advantage of someone through some crafty underhanded methods of deception treachery leading people to believe something is true when it isn't that's deceit deceit is the chief characteristic of the evil one the devil who brought about the downfall of mankind by deceit that is not to be part of the nature of God's people there'd be none of those traits among God's people hypocrisy you know is pretending to be what you're not saying one thing and doing the opposite envy is rooted in being covetousness it's being resentful of the good things other people have got rather than rejoicing and being glad in what someone else has got wanting to have it yourself and wishing they didn't that's envy now slander it's speaking evil of someone to bring them down that's slander ruining someone's reputation behind their back it's saying something about their character making a statement about someone which belittles them in someone else's eyes when that person is not present to be able to defend themselves and which is not true in the first place malice deceit hypocrisy envy slander are all love busters they'll bust your marriage and they'll bust a church they're trust busters they'll bust your marriage they'll bust your church they're community destroyers there's no place for any of this among the people of god who are longing for heaven instead we're to be living and longing for pure spiritual milk it's not that they're infants in christ like i said they've been there for probably some of them for 30 years being followers of christ but how do newborn kids love crave desire milk eagerly frequently desperately loudly yeah it's the essential nourishment without which they will perish and die life is totally dependent upon it and totally dependent upon the person who gives it to you you mums are best to describe it for us i think so too for the christian so too for you so too for me if we're going to survive if we're going to live if we're going to grow if we're going to mature if we're going to persevere into salvation about to be revealed we need to be people who crave that which is essential to grow the pure word of god the pure word literally is without deceit that's interesting without deceit word of god we will love god's word just

aside here do you are you shrivelling are you perishing are you drying up it's possible i mean just coming to church on a sunday to read god's word once a week that's good but it's not sufficient you might just stay alive i mean i've got fed once a week i might make it if you have a decent meal once a week i might make it but i wonder are we do we i mean we read the old testament the new testament at church on a sunday that's good but what's your diet like during the week what's my diet i'll tell you what my diet like during the week is this i have a bulk feed on tuesday wednesday thursday and friday and saturday i go for a bit of a fast sunday i'm having a bit of a read with a feed now and monday i have a bit of a feed as well yes i'm i'm probably getting a nourishing meal during the week not too bad i'm using mcshaney myth at the moment so two old testament readings and two new testament readings and sometimes i get behind sometimes i get ahead currently i'm on track to read the whole bible in a year but brothers and sisters st lucia bible church can i encourage you to be encourage each other to be in the word regularly so we don't die crave as children infants crave god's word and if well at verse 3 since all this is an appropriate way to live because you've tasted that the lord is good it's a statement of fact right it's not a question that having believed you have tasted that the lord is good it's just like saying if you've been at church this morning you've seen roy hopefully haven't been asleep all morning no doubt about it so brothers and sisters we have tasted that the lord is good if you haven't can i encourage you to talk to me to another christian or to another christian you know but in the light of who we are right those who have been born again let us gird up the loins of our minds setting our hope on the grace to come and live lives of holiness and love one another from a genuine heart and be doing this more and more as we look forward to the revealing of jesus on that great day let's pray our father in heaven we thank you for your life giving nourishing word please help us as we hear it and look forward to that great day of salvation to come in light of the salvation that we have received to be able to walk and to live as your holy people in love towards you and love towards one another we pray in jesus name amen so we pray downs

how pin die nor we pray high and we hearing the night of the other many things are interesting and now haveStart