

TITLE: Responding to the Word of Grace (Part 1)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:22

THEME: The Believer's Response to the Word of God (the Gospel of Christ)

NUMBER: 1PET33-1205

DATE: December 11, 2005

Read Passage

This am we embark on a new passage in our study of 1 Peter

Prob. noticed that this passage actually takes us into chapter 2. Was somewhat of a last min. change; I wasn't planning on going into chapt. 2, but as I was exegeting this section of Script. it became plain to me that t/thread of thought goes beyond t/chapter division.

Let me remind you that chapter & verse divisions are not inspired

Peter didn't write & number ea. v. & chapt. T/chapt. & v. format we have in our NT comes from a 16th c. scholar by name of Robert Stephanus who published a Gk. & Latin edition of t/NT in Geneva in 1551. First English Bible to feature v. divisions like our own was t/Geneva Bible of 1560. All that to say: t/chapter & v. divisions we have can sometimes be misleading.

Two Main Threads of Thought

One of t/things that became obvious to me as I worked my way through this passage was that there were 2 main threads of thought: Love for t/brethren; Essential nature of t/Word (Gospel). I decided to emphasize t/latter over t/former. IOW - I am organizing this section around our response to the word of Grace.

In that sense it is an extension of verses 13-21

Those 9 vv. were t/first hands-on application of all that Peter had written. Rem. vv. 1-12 were filled w/rich doctrinal truth about t/nature of t/Triune God as well as t/nature of our salvation {*overview*}

In v. 13 we have t/coordinating conjunction "therefore" pointing to t/application of that truth in our lives. (therefore, do this).

We called it "our response to salvation grace" & spent sev. weeks working R way thru that section which we summed up in the statement==>

Responding to Salvation Grace results in the pleasure of hope and the pursuit of holiness.

Now we come to verse 22

V. 22 thru v. 3 of chapt 2 is an extension of that thot (our response). BUT, there is a subtle diff.==> vv. 13-21 focused primarily on our relationship w/God (gird up our minds; fix our hope in X; forsake sin; pursue holiness because God is holy; conduct ourselves w/fear; our faith & hope R in God). Focus was up (God). In v. 22 to 2:3 t/focus shifts from UP to OUT. IOW - it's shifting from our relationship w/Holy God to our relationships w/each other & our relationship to God's Word.

Verses 13-21 were - Responding to Salvation Grace

Verse 23 to 2:3 - Responding to the Word of Grace

Turn to 1 Thessalonians . . . (keep finger in 1 Peter)

{Sum up chapter 1 through 2:12}

{Read 2:13} - This is it folks!

Responding to Salvation Grace results in the pleasure of hope and the pursuit of holiness.

Responding to the Word of Grace Will Bring God's Blessing in Your Spiritual Race.

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

4 main points under this heading (all begin w/letter "R"). We'll just look at t/first one this AM. How do you RR to the W of Grace? Be sure to =>

A. Refresh Your Love for the Brethren (22a) "*What is the Measure of my Love?*"

Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love each other from a pure heart.

1. Some commentators think Peter is addressing an existing problem

Some even propose that these 1st c. Xns to whom Peter writes had grown cold in their "brotherly love" for one another & relapsed into forming clichés based on wealth & prominence. Perhaps t/more prominent Xns had become reluctant to love those who were poor & outcasts.

Maybe a glimpse of that in 2:18 where Peter addresses those in "servant-master" relationships.

a. While there may be some truth in this proposal I think that Peter's words are more preemptive in nature

IOW - I don't think there was some major issue of disunity & abuse. But, there were some issues. We not only have this passage that exhorts them toward love, but also 3:8-9 {read} and 4:8-9 {read}

Then there's 2:1 which implies that "malice, hypocrisy, envy and slander" was likely evident among them to some degree.

Getting slack in our love for each other & in our striving for unity is always a danger. Why we need to regird our minds on God's Word.

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

How are we, as Xns, to respond to God's Word, particularly t/Gospel. In this context those two things (God's Word & t/Gospel) are nearly synonymous. How do you respond? How are you to act?

A. Refresh Your Love for the Brethren (22a)

Yes, there's love, but refresh that love; be sure that you haven't grown apathetic in your love for one another.

2. That's the focus of verse 22

This is one of t/central truths of the NT. We are to love one another.

John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren . . .

1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

There's no doubt in anyone's mind that we are to love each other. Yet, what does that flow out of? What is the fuel for that sort of thing?

If we unwrap 1 John 3:14 we find t/answer==>

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren . . .

It's another way of saying that t/result of genuine salvation is love for other believers. Why John could say in chapter 4 ==>

The one who does not love [his brother] does not know God . . .

It's a fruit, an evidence of t/Holy Spirit's work in our hearts. In that regard, it heads t/list in Galatians 5 (fruit of the Spirit is . . .)

In rightly responding to the Word of Grace you are to ==>

A. Refresh Your Love for the Brethren (22a)

That starts by remembering that God saved you for that very thing; He saved you that you would love one another.

That's where Peter starts ==>

Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love each other from a pure heart.

3. Our salvation is the fuel for the fire of brotherly love

That's what Peter is saying==>

Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth . . .

That's your salvation! Your "soul" ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) HAS BEEN purified.

a. Perfect Active Participle

Perfect tense points to a past action w/continuing results. In light of that, "What is the measure of your love?" Your soul has been purified, how pure is your love for your brother's and sisters?

b. That imagery harkens back to the OT

All one has to do is a search for words such as purify, purification & you will see how many times this concept occurs in t/OT.

Were literal rites of purification for t/Jewish priests; same was true for t/people. But all of these outward rites foreshadowed what was to occur in t/heart through t/coming, death, burial, resurrection of JC.

So you have Hebrews 1:3 which calls Him t/very radiance of t/Father's glory & t/exact representation of t/Father's nature. He is t/one who upholds all things by the word of His power. V. 3 goes on to say that "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (that's OT, Levitical language)

JC was t/once-for-all sacrifice for sin; He was t/one through whom men could find purification of their sins and of their lives.

c. You have been purified, your sins have been forgiven & you are a new creation in Christ, by means of your obedience to truth

(1) "What's the truth?"

It's God's Word in general, the Gospel in specific. Rem., we said that in this passage, "God's Word" & "The Gospel" are nearly synonymous. The "truth" is t/"imperishable seed" of v. 23 // "Word of God", v. 23. // "Word of t/Lord" (v. 25) // "Pure spiritual milk" (2:2).

The truth that saved you was t/message of God's Word; t/good news of JC that we call "the gospel."

(2) Then, "What's the obedience?" (as NASB translates it)

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls . . .

What's t/obedience about? How can we say that our souls have been made pure by means of our obedience? "That sounds like works?! I though we were saved by grace through faith?"

It's not salvation by works. Obedience in this context is synonymous with saving faith. To believe t/Gospel is to obey the Gospel & that's not a human work, it's a divine work.

(a) This is saying the same thing we saw way back in verse 2

Chapt. 1 verse 2 and chapt. 1 verse 22 parallel each other. ==>

[you were chosen for salvation] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

That's election.

by the sanctifying work of the Spirit,

That's t/work of the HS in convicting the sinner of sin & drawing them to faith in X.

that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood:

"Sprinkled w/His blood" - that's the "having purified your souls" of v. 22.

"obey JC" - that's the "obedience to the truth" of. v. 22.

There are times in t/NT when t/initial belief of sinners in t/Gospel is called "obedience." In that sense it's synonymous w/belief. Acts 17:30 - "**God commands men everywhere to repent**" - when men turn from their sin & believe in JC as Lord & Savior they have obeyed that command.

This is called, "The obedience of faith". IOW - when you believe t/gospel for 1st time & are saved, it is for you an act of obedience to t/faith. Very 1st act of full-fledged, obedience that any person can render to God - to believe in t/Gospel.

See that in Romans 1:5 where Paul referred to t/salvation of non-Jews as **(the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles)**

See that in Romans 16:26 talks about t/gospel being "**made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.**"

Acts 6:7 **And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.** (that is, they turned from their sin & believed in X).

(b) Those who obey Christ are those who believe the Gospel

BUT EVEN THAT FAITH/OBEDIENCE IS A GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE. Listen - our salvation is solely by God's grace (χαρις - unmerited/undeserved). By grace through the instrument of faith.

Salvation is not God's reward for my belief. We don't contribute faith to grace to purchase salvation. It's all a gift; it's all grace (Eph. 2:8-9). Faith is not the saving work, grace is.

d. Don't forget the context:

That gift of salvation fuels our love for each other==>

**Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth [for what??]
for a sincere love of the brethren . . .**

(1) How many are using the King James?

You probably think I've skipped something, right? There's a textual issue. KJV which adds the words "through the Spirit" ==>

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren . . .

The oldest MSS don't have "through the Spirit." It is likely that somewhere along t/way a copyist added these words to clarify t/fact that conversion to X (purification of souls) comes by way of the HS. That's good and true, but it is doubtful that this was part of the original text.

The best and earliest ancient MSS don't have that phrase. If it was part of t/original, there's no reason why it would have been deleted. Much more likely that "through the spirit" was added to the text.

A. Refresh Your Love for the Brethren (22a)

Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth, for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love each other from a pure heart.

4. Four characteristics of this kind of love: sincere; brotherly; fervent; pure

a. First: Our love is to be sincere

This is another way of saying that it is to be "non-hypocritical." Romans 12:9-10 captures this so very well ==>

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

This is sincere love. It is w/o hypocrisy; it clings to what is good; it is devoted in brotherly love; it prefers the other person in honor.

I know that some of you are going to say, *"Well, I won't love this person or that person because if I did I'd be a hypocrite. Tony said we have to be sincere and since I can't be sincere I won't do it."* Okay, my friend, that's being "stupid as stones" as Jonathan Edwards would have put it.

(1) What does it mean to be a "hypocrite?"

Basically hypocrites present themselves as something or someone other than who they really are.

An example of this is given by W. Robert Cook, who for years taught systematic theology at Western Seminary in Portland, OR ==>

"Several years ago, in a trip to Greece, I visited the ancient site of Epidaurus. Among the things I saw was a magnificent outdoor theater dating back to the 3d century B.C. It has near perfect acoustics due to the mathematical precision with which it was planned and build. It is said that all 12,000 people could hear the slightest breath or the tearing of a piece of paper from the stage without any amplification. As she was describing this remarkable sight to us I noticed that our Greek guide was continually referring to the "hypocrites" who performed on the stage. On occasion, as she would remember her audience was American, she would restate herself and speak of the "actors."

This is what it means to be a hypocrite. It means you are an "actor" playing a role that's not really who you are.

Let me ask you, "Who are you?" If you are really a Xn you are: born again // new creation // have a new nature // love righteousness // have God's HS within you // can do all things through X who strengthens you.

Don't tell me you can't love w/o hypocrisy! As we've seen, God has recreated you, saved you IOT you would love. Swallow your pride & in t/strength of X & t/power of the HS love your brother, your sister.

a. Our love is to be sincere

b. Second: Our love is to be brotherly

[it's] a sincere love of the brethren . . . ("love of the brethren" = 1 word)
Latin Vulgate translates it w/the word "fraternitalis" (fraternity).

(1) That's the idea - it's the word φιλαδέλφια (brotherly love)

Last week we took a break from 1 Peter & I preached through 1st 2 vv. of 1 Tim. 5. That passage focused on the sort of family or brotherly love we're to have.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 **Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.**

One of t/things I said was that relationships in t/CH are to be marked w/same kind of consideration & purity that marks a godly family.

I quoted 1 of the early CH apologists, a man by name of Athenagoras who defended t/CH against false charges by the Greek/Roman authorities. Athenagoras wrote that these strange people known as Xns weren't immoral or dangerous. In fact, he wrote that they considered each other according to their age as sons and daughters; brothers and sisters; fathers and mothers. [Legat. 32]

We are a fraternity; a fraternity of t/redeemed.

Most of you know that I'm an only child. But thing I have said over t/years was that I have no lack for brothers and sisters. I have a huge family; each one of you are my brother and my sister.

Jesus in Matt. 23:8 said that all who know him are "brothers" (or sisters)
That kind of love is marked by a bond that cannot be broken (family).

c. Third: Our love is to be fervent

Peter uses t/same word later, in 4:8 - **Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.**

(1) ἔκτενωσ – comes from the verb τελλω, *to stretch*

Has t/idea of intense strain, being stretched. It's to be passionate, but not only passionate, also consistent. IOW - it's t/kind of love that has an intensity about it. It goes t/distance, it lasts. It's not a wimpy, overly emotive. It's a love w/depth. It's t/kind of love that should mark a marriage as well as a family & since t/CH of JC is t/Bride of X & a family, it should mark our relationships as well.

a. *Our love is to be sincere*

b. *Our love is to be brotherly*

c. *Our love is to be fervent*

d. Fourth: Our love is to be pure (from a pure heart)

[we have been redeemed] for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love each other from a pure heart. (our love is to be pure).

(1) I hate to do this again . . .

This sort of thing doesn't usually come up twice like this, but there's another textual issue here that I have to mention because many of you are looking in your Bibles & don't see t/word "pure." Lest you think I'm a KJ detractor, I'm siding w/good ol' AV which has t/word "pure." Again, this is an issue that revolves around minor differences among ancient MSS & "pure heart" in my opinion is t/likely reading & I don't want to confuse you beyond that. (See me afterward...)

(2) Our love is to be pure, or from a pure heart, or from the heart

It's from a heart that is καθαρος (catharsis - purification of bad emotions)
Idea of having a "Pure heart" rich background in OT (esp. Psalms) ==>
Psalm 24 [where psalmist asks] **Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart...**

Psalm 51:10 [following David's sin w/Bathsheba] **Create in me a clean (or pure) heart, O God . . .**

Psalm 73:1 **Surely God is good to Israel, [qualifies it:] To those who are pure in heart!**

Not absent from NT==>

Matt. 5:8 [6th beatitude] **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**

Medieval theologian, Thomas À Kempis (C. 1380–1471) ==>

If your love be pure, simple, and well ordered, you shall be free from bondage.

IOW - there's something freeing about it.

"Love and do as you please." [Augustine]

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

A. Refresh Your Love for the Brethren (22a)

a. Our love is to be sincere

b. Our love is to be brotherly

c. Our love is to be fervent

d. Our love is to be pure (from a pure heart)

What kind of CH would this be if we made this kind of love our focus?
Don't get me wrong, I think it is, but we can always "refresh that love."

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 **9 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more.**

In t/time we have left . . .

5. What does this sort of love look like?

Nine quick takes on this "sincere, brotherly, fervent, pure" love.

a. #1 - Love for each other begins with a love for God

Principle: You will Love God

(1) 1 John 4:20-21; 5:1-2

b. #2 - Love for each other begins with a love for the truth

Principle: You will Love God's Word

(1) Context of our passage in 1 Peter

Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love each other from a pure heart.

c. #3 Love for each other flows out of a love for the church

Principle: You will Love God's Church

(1) Ephesians 4:11-16

We can't have a "take it or leave it" attitude about t/CH. T/CH is t/body for whom X died. He loves t/CH & so must we. I'm grieved whenever I hear of a Xn who has become disillusioned w/the CH (maybe they've been burned or hurt) & as a result they have removed themselves from it. Tragic.

If there was anyone who could use t/excuse "people in t/CH have hurt me so I'm not going to be part of t/CH anymore" it was TAP. Read 1 & 2 Corinthians sometime. That CH alone gave Paul his fill of heartache. He poured his life into them & he was rejected by them // mocked // publically shamed. He didn't turn his back on them.

I've been burned. Been times that I've wondered if I'm walking around w/a sign on my back, like in Jr. High, "Kick Me."

Toward t/end of 1999 I went thru a deep time of depression. It was one of my times of greatest need. During that time that several men in t/CH (AZ) decided to pull t/plug on me. When one of them found out I was taking medication for depression & panic attacks he sent me an email telling me I was in no less sin than if I were out committing adultery. It was sent under t/guise of "love and concern." If that's love, I'd hate to see hatred!

CH isn't perfect, but it's all we've got. God loves it and is working to perfect it in love.

d. #4 - Love for each other means we stick together

Principle: You will be Glue

(1) Psalm 133 Disunity is a deformity

e. # 5 - Love for each other means we give preference to

each other *Principle: You will be selfless*

(1) Philippians 2:1 ff.

Love for each other means: We serve one another // Requires humility (no celebrities or hero worship) // We lay down our lives for each other ==> 1 John 3:16 **We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren**

f. # 6 - Love for each other means we are willing to correct

Principle: You will risk

Isn't there risk involved in doing that? In correcting someone else or confronting them about something you're concerned about?

I have a little joke about how you know someone is really your friend. A true friend will tell you if you have something in your nose (I can't say the word!)

Some people have spiritual buggers in their noses & maybe you need to tell them about it. I'm not talking about being nit-picky, I'm talking about sin, or potential sin issues, not matters of preference.

Even in extreme cases of CH discipline - that is as t/most loving thing we can do for someone who is straying (Hebrews 12).

f. Love for each other means we are willing to correct

Corollary to that is we will receive correction ==>

Proverbs 12:1 **Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.**

Proverbs 17:10 **A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding Than a hundred blows into a fool.**

Theme of Proverbs is that t/wise receive instruction & correction while t/foolish don't. They don't listen/learn & won't be corrected. They know it all. Sums up what it means to be fool.

i. # 7 - Love means we help each other during times of need

Principle: You will be There

(1) 1 John 3:17-18 (James says that it's tantamount to dead faith)

j. # 8 - Love means we bear with and forgive each other

Principle: You will grin and bear it

(1) Colossians 3:12-14

g. # 9 - Love means we pray for each other Principle: You

will be on your knees

James 5:16 **Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.**

Rightly responding to the Word of grace? Refresh your love for the brethren? *"What is the depth of my love?"* ** 2 Thess. 1:3 **We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;**