

## 1 Peter 2:1-10

“Into His Marvelous Light”

The last couple of weeks the context has found itself focusing on appropriate Christian conduct. Ch 2 is going to continue to follow that flow; there is a proper response to the grace of God that’s been exhibited toward you (we’ll talk about that in a little more detail in a moment). Initially Peter spoke of the demeanor of our lives *personally*, that we’re to be *holy*, that is, separated and consecrated to God. He spoke to us of what that means *practically*, equipped us with tools to help us in our strides toward that *specifically*.

Then he began to focus on how we as the body of Christ are to interact with one another *collectively*. Here’s the principle: holy living is incomplete if it’s unaccompanied by *love*. It doesn’t matter how self disciplined you are or how clean your life may be, if you have not *love* it profits you *nothing*. Remember these words? “*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*” 1 Cor 13:1-3 You can be the most spiritual, the most self sacrificial person on the planet, apart from the love of God abiding *in* you and coursing *through* you, it’s pointless. (Meaning it will serve no eternal purpose) Now Peter is going to spend a little time focusing on how this love plays out practically in our midst.

He told us there in Vs 22-23 of Ch 1 that we are to love one another fervently with a pure heart having been born again *not* of corruptible seed but incorruptible through the word of God which lives and abides forever. It’s with that understanding that we approach Vs 1 of Ch 2, because if to the positive we’re to love one another with a pure heart, then to the negative there are some things that shouldn’t be a reality *in* us or taking place *through* us or because *of* us.

Vs1-3

Ok, a minute ago I told you that there is a proper response to the grace of God that’s been exhibited toward you. The principle of Divine initiative and human responsibility seems to surface often around here. Meaning God initiated a relationship with you, now you and I have a responsibility to God in that relationship. What’s the Divine initiative in view here? You’ve been born again. God did that for you, God did that for me. I wasn’t born again because I thought it was a good idea so I committed *to* it and went through *with it*. I can’t be born again of the Spirit of my own initiative anymore than I can be born of the flesh through my own initiative.

Pertaining to the spirit I was dead in my sins, and being dead in sin I couldn't do anything for myself spiritually. If you're dead you can't make yourself alive and being dead in sin I couldn't make myself alive in Christ. That was the work of the Spirit of God through the word of God by the grace of God; Divine initiative. But now that I'm alive in Christ I have a certain responsibility toward God in the relationship that He initiated with me, I owe Him, I'm not my own I've been bought at a price (not through corruptible things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of lamb with out blemish and with out spot) therefore I'm to glorify God in my body and in my spirit which are His.

One of the things that I'm called to do as His child is to love you as my brother or sister in Christ.

Jesus said, "*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" John 13:35 Here's the deal, if you and I are to love one another than the things listed in Vs 1 cannot be a part of the equation. You and I have a responsibility as unto the Lord to lay aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking. If these things are brewing in you they will stunt, or stifle your spiritual growth. They'll poison your intake of the word, therefore lay them aside. You see there is a negative purging phase as it pertains to holiness, not only are there things that *should be* a part of your life, there are other things that *should not be* a part of your life.

The words, "laying aside" or casting off would be like unto removing a garment. When Christ comes into your life you exchange beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. You exchange your old worn out sin battered garments for the robe of righteousness that's provided for you by Jesus Christ In Ephesians Paul said it like this, "...put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." Eph 4:22-24 To the Colossians he said, "*But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*" Col 3:8-10 James said this, "...lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." James 1:21

Another way to understand all of this is that we're to crucify the flesh and walk in the Spirit. If we're to love others we've got to crucify our fleshly tendencies and those ugly qualities that center in self, and self-love; laying aside all malice.

What is malice? Really what it amounts to is a slow burning anger that festers with intent to harm another. You've heard of "malicious intent," it's intent to harm another. You don't have a forgiving spirit you have a heart to make one pay, or somehow punish them. Yet the bible says, "*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*" Eph 4:31-32

Next he says, "all deceit" maybe your bible says, "guile" the idea is that of baiting a hook. Things look good outwardly but there's danger lurking inwardly, really these characteristics are like chain links, they're all connected. If you have malicious intent, you want to harm someone in some way, be it assassinate their character, ruin their reputation or simply do damage of some kind for some reason, odds are you're not going to be open about that. Things will look good on the surface, but you're being deceitful. Peter says lay that stuff aside, those are characteristics of the old man. The unregenerate individual, you've been born again of incorruptible see, and if you're to lead a life that's holy, then you have to learn to love one another and lay these things aside.

"Hypocrisy" very close to deceit, works right alongside *of* deceit it's pretending to be something you're not. Literally it speaks of being an actor, playing a character that's not really you. You're acting the part of righteousness when there's wickedness/maliciousness in your heart.

"Envy," there are times when jealousy can actually carry good connotations.

The Lord our God is a jealous God, not jealous *of* you, but jealous *for* you, He doesn't want to share you with someone or something else. He wants to be and is worthy to be the chief priority of your heart. However *envy* always carries evil or ungodly connotations, there's nothing redemptive about envy. It's the displeasure that burns in you when you hear of or see for yourself the advantage or prosperity of another. I would put envy on the high alert level of danger, it was the sin of envy that delivered our Lord up to the cross. The bible tells us that Pilate knew that the chief priests and the elders had delivered Him up because of *envy*. Envy has a very real propensity to set a chain of events into motion that can do brutal unrelenting damage to another, it's a very "volatile" sin.

"And all evil speaking" or slander, when you have it in for someone you find little pockets of people to subtly slander them in. You'll hurt them to help yourself. These kinds of attitudes and actions are not becoming to the believer and need to be laid aside.

Now obviously this is an exhortation that can *only* apply to believers because unbelievers don't have the new nature that we're given in Christ. It's amazing how many believers will put trips on unbelievers as though the unregenerate can lead a regenerate life. The bible says, "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*" Jer 13:23

Mankind by default has a sin nature, that's why we need a Savior. Now we don't condone sin on any level, but sinners will act like sinners; that's what *they do*, it's not what *you do*. *You* lay aside these things because you have not so learned Christ...therefore (Vs2)

Vs2

You see the point being that these kinds of characteristics: malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and evil speaking will hinder if not altogether arrest your growth and development as a child of God. They'll "ruin your appetite" for God's word. How many times have you prepared a good, well-balanced meal only to have your children really not partake of any of it because unbeknownst to you they just filled up with junk? If that becomes a pattern they become sickly, unhealthy, malnutrition can stunt and stop your growth. Even so when we stop feeding on the word and start partaking of these other kinds of junk we'll stop growing and lose our appetite for the word of God. When Christians are growing in God's word, they're *peacemakers*, not *troublemakers*, they promote a spirit of unity in the bond of peace with in the body of Christ.

Now, why does Peter says, "as newborn babes" desire the pure milk of the word? Is it because he's writing to new believers? No, listen, often times when people read this they think along the lines of this being an exhortation to new believers, something they're beyond, they want the *meat* of the word, not the *milk*. Perhaps partially because of the rebuke found in Hebrews how that they should've been partaking of solid food but had come to need milk (spiritually speaking); however that's not the context in which Peter makes this statement. He's not saying you're only spiritual babies therefore you need milk. He's saying that there's an instinctive drive in a newborn baby for its mother's milk, the baby doesn't need to be told what to do, the drive is there. Even so when we come to Christ there should be an innate drive, a desire (the word "desire" here suggests the voracious, hungry impatience of a baby at its mealtime) for the word of God. We should be cultivating a healthy appetite for God's word. But Peter is saying that no matter *what* stage of Christian development we may be in, it doesn't matter if you've known Christ for a week, or for 60 yrs, regardless of your level of maturity there should be a drive and a desire for the unadulterated word of God.

We don't need to be entertained, or emotionally charged, we need to be fed the pure word of God. Why? So that we might grow and mature as believers, if you're baby stops partaking of milk the yellow lights begin to flash don't they, something is wrong and potential disaster is looming on the horizon if things aren't tended to quickly.

The same is true for you as a believer, if you're not partaking of the word, not just here but at home as well, something is wrong, the yellow lights should be flashing, you've lost your appetite for the milk you're not being nourished, you're not growing like you should if at all. Odds are you're a weak and anemic believer at best if you're not in God's word on a consistent, persistent basis. God's word *has* life, it *gives* life, and it *nourishes* life.

In fact, one of the evidences for spiritual life is a hunger for spiritual food, a.k.a. the word of God. So the question that confronts us is, "How's your appetite for the word of God been lately?" Do you read your bible at home or somewhere where you can have a devotional life on a regular basis? If not take inventory, is their sin somewhere in your life ruining your appetite for the Word, are there any changes that need to be made priority-wise so that you can give God's word the attention that your inner man needs?

Understand as well that when I talk about getting the well balanced diet of God's word I'm talking about the whole thing from Genesis to Revelation. It's amazing how many believers think that because we're under the "new covenant" that the OT is irrelevant. However the O.T. is the NT concealed, the NT is the OT revealed. Jesus reiterated Deut 8:3 in Matt Ch 4 when He said, "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*" Matt 4:4 By the way the word "pure" here in Vs 2 (or maybe your bible says sincere) is deliberately contrasted (in the Greek) with the word "deceit" in Vs 1. God's word is truth, God's word does not deceive therefore the child of God should be truthful as well and not deceitful.

Vs 3

Remember the overall picture that's being painted of godly conduct, holiness, consecration, separation unto the Lord. If you've experience the fact (tasted) that the Lord is gracious, you've received of the grace of God, you're saved, you should be different. So understand that when we're talking about separation we're not talking about being separated from the world, living in a monastery or something. We're *in* the world, we're not to be *of* the world, we're talking about leading a life of separation from the works of the flesh. We're not to be *somewhere* else, we're to be *something* else, a new creation old things have passed away, behold all things have become new.

Vs4-5

So we might say that Peter switches here from *milk* to *mortar*, from speaking about how we *interact* with one another as the *body* to showing that we're actually *interwoven* or *bound* together as a *building*. "Coming to Him as to a living stone." This isn't a reference to salvation, but again it's talking about sanctification, word "coming" is in the present tense speaking of an ongoing habitual approach. One called it, "an intimate association of communion and fellowship between believers and their Lord."

The metaphor of Christ being a rock is nothing new to scripture. Peter has referred to a living hope, the living word, and now the living stone. Christ is our rock, He is living and He gives life to others. He's the chief cornerstone of the church.

You remember when Jesus was speaking to His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" "Some say J.B. others Elijah, perhaps one of the prophets..." "Who do *you* say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus said, "Very good Peter, you've received revelation from My Father in heaven." Then He said, "...*and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*" Matt 16:18 The understanding that Jesus is the Christ (the Savior) the Son of the Living God will be the foundation of the church.

Jesus refers to Himself as a stone again in Matt 21 when he quoted Psalm 118 (just like Peter does here in Vs 7) with reference to the religious leaders rejecting Him, yet He was the One that God had promised to send them in His word, yet to them He'd become a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. He went on to say, "*And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.*" Matt 21:44 Meaning you will either be broken *before* Him and come *to* Him as your Savior or you will be crushed *by* Him in judgment, one way or another we'll all encounter Jesus Christ the choice is yours. Should you fall on Him He'll serve as a foundation for your life, should you reject Him, you're not finished with Him. Daniel, in his vision saw a stone cut "with out hands" which smote the image on its feet of iron mingled with clay and broke them in pieces. The stone was the stone of judgment which will smite the earth, a picture of Christ coming to judge the earth; He the Living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.

Vs 5

When you're born again you become a part of the building of God, the church. The church isn't this building, it's you. Paul told the Ephesians, "...*you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*" Eph 2:19-22 In Christ God lives in you by His Holy Spirit, you are the temple of the Living God. Each time someone is born again it's like they're being quarried out of the pit of sin, set and cemented by grace into the building God.

Not only do you serve as the temple but you are a holy priesthood, and as a priest you offer service and sacrifice to God. Now we don't go out and grab a cow, cut its throat and offer its flesh and blood to God upon the altar (I for 1 am glad for that). But being a spiritual house we offer spiritual sacrifices. What are sacrifices that we make of a spiritual nature? The bible teaches us that praise to God is a spiritual sacrifice, the bible teaches when we lead people to Christ it's like unto an offering unto the Lord. When you give financially to the Lord the scripture recognizes that as a spiritual sacrifice, the service you render to God is a spiritual sacrifice. You are a holy priesthood, how is your service, your sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ coming along?

#### Vs6-8

You see he's connecting the dots here between disobedience to God's word and rejecting Jesus Christ To you Jesus Christ is precious (another indicator of the Spirit of God in you) how do you perceive Jesus? Problematic, a bit of a pain, or is He precious? To you who believe He is precious, listen if Christ isn't precious to you, you're not saved. What Peter is saying here is that had the religious leaders really obeyed the word, they'd have received Jesus Christ who was promised *by* the word. But even though God had entrusted the word to them, they disobeyed the word, and consequently rejected Jesus Christ Who is the very cornerstone of our salvation.

#### Vs9-10

Now God hasn't replaced Israel with the church, but everything that He wanted for Israel He's doing through the church as well. Just as God chose Israel He's chosen you to be a part of His church, as to where Israel *had* a priesthood (not everyone was a priest) He's made of *every believer* a *royal priesthood*. Now with Israel, royalty and the priesthood were never combined, you might be a priest, you might be a king, but you would not be a royal priest. However Jesus both the King of kings and our great High Priest, in keeping with His work in you, you are a *royal* priesthood.

His own *special* people, what is it that makes you special? Let me tell you it's nothing in you or nothing about you, it's who you belong to. You might go to a museum and find all sorts of ordinary things; sunglasses, coats, uniforms, cars, jewelry etc. but what makes them special is that they *belonged* to someone famous, someone whom the world esteems as significant. God grabs hold of ordinary people, what makes them special is that they are *His*.

God has done all this *in* you, all this *for* you, why? “That you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” God considers you to be a trophy of His grace, you know where you’ve been, you know the things that He has redeemed you from, praise Him for it. He’s brought you out of darkness and into His *marvelous* light. People should see and hear the good news of what God has done for you, magnify Him, glorify Him. Jesus said it like this, “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*” Matt 5:16

We once were not a people, with out hope being with out God in the world, now we are the people of God. There was a time when we were with out mercy, now we’ve obtained mercy. We’re so glad that God is *rich* in mercy; let me tell you that’s one gift that you don’t want to miss out on, if you need mercy today call upon Him today. Don’t leave here today with out the manifold mercy of God ministering to you wherever you may have need, then go forth and proclaim the praises of Him who’s called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Prayer Points:

Lord may our lives praise Your name, You’ve done such an enormous work, greater than we could ever imagine, how can we not praise Your name? Help us, and help us Lord that we would lead lives separated from the works of the flesh and given over to the power of Your Spirit. Create in us a fresh hunger and ever increasing appetite for Your word, as newborn babes that we might desire the pure milk of Your word. Teach us obedience to Your word.

If you’re here today and God is calling out to you in the stillness of your own heart, calling you out of darkness into His marvelous light, quarrying you out of the pit of sin so as to set you, cement you into His building, the body of Christ, why fight Him any further? Christ went to the cross for you, spilled His blood and laid down His life for you that by believing in Him you’d never perish but have everlasting life. What would it profit you to gain the whole world but lose your own soul? What is this life when compared to eternity but a vapor?

“People think they know me, but they don’t. Not really. Actually, I am one of the loneliest people on this earth. I cry sometimes, because it hurts. It does. To be honest, I guess you could say that it hurts to be me.” Michael Jackson Is that you? It doesn’t have to be that way come to Christ, He’ll heal your hurts and make you whole, forgive you of your sin.