

Excerpts from Life-Study of 1 Peter, Message 14 The Full Salvation of the Triune God and Its Issues (9)

Bible Verses:

1 Pet. 1:22 Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently,

1 Pet. 1:23 Having been regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God.

1 Pet. 1:25 But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which has been announced to you as the gospel.

In this message we will consider 1 Peter 1:22-25. Verse 22 says, "Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently." According to his habit in writing, Peter in this verse puts a number of things together. First, he says, "Since you have purified your souls."

Our soul is composed of our mind, emotion, and will, which are also parts of our heart. To have our soul purified is to have our mind, emotion, and will, as parts of our heart, purified from any kind of defilement or contamination (Acts 15:9; James 4:8). Actually, this means to have our mind, emotion, and will delivered from all things other than God and fixed on God as the sole object and unique goal. This kind of purification is accomplished by our obedience to the truth, which is the content and reality of our faith. When we obey the truth, the content and reality of our faith in Christ, our entire soul is concentrated on God and in this way is purified from all things other than God. This is to have our souls saved from all filthiness by our receiving the implanted word (1:21), which is the sanctifying truth (John 17:17).

In order to understand what it means to purify our souls by our obedience to the truth, we must be clear concerning the meaning of truth in this verse. Truth here is the sanctifying truth, which is God's word of reality (John 17:17). Truth in this verse does not mean doctrine. Truth is the reality contained in God's word and conveyed by it. For example, John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world." This is the divine word. This

word, however, should not merely be a doctrine to us, as it is with so many readers of John 3:16. To read this verse only in a doctrinal way is to have a natural understanding. This natural understanding is devilish, for the devil is behind our natural understanding. If our natural understanding occupies us in full, it becomes devilish. If we are to have more than a natural understanding of John 3:16, we need to touch the reality contained in this short word and conveyed by it. When we read, “God so loved the world,” we need to ask ourselves if we have experienced this love. We should say, “God so loved the world. Does this ‘world’ include me? Does this word mean that God so loved me?” Anyone who reads John 3:16 in this way will get saved. Such a one would say, “O God, how I thank You that the world includes me. For You to love the world means that You love me.” This is to take John 3:16 as truth, as reality, and not merely as a doctrine.

As the Judaizers tried to influence the Jewish believers, so today certain ones may try to influence those in the Lord’s recovery. For instance, a young brother may love the Lord’s recovery and praise the Lord that he is in the recovery. But then a relative who is a pastor with a theological degree may visit this

brother and say, “What do you mean ‘recovery’? I have a master’s degree from a seminary, but I have never heard about a recovery. Who told you that the Lord has a recovery?” The young brother may not know what to say. Later, he may be unhappy and begin to have doubts in his mind concerning the recovery. He may say to himself, “I certainly have been helped by the ministry in the Lord’s recovery. But what about this pastor with a master’s degree in theology? Can he be completely wrong about the recovery?” What this brother needs is the girding up of the loins of his mind.

To gird up our mind is actually to purify our soul. Whenever our mind is wandering, our soul is impure. Dissenting thoughts cause our mind to wander. These dissenting thoughts may enter our mind like fiery darts. When our mind begins to wander, our soul becomes unclean. If this is our situation, we need to purify our soul.

God will not purify our soul for us. We need to do this ourselves by our obedience to the truth that we have heard and received. Suppose a certain brother struggles for a period of time concerning the Lord’s recovery. Eventually, by God’s mercy and the moving of the sanctifying Spirit within him, he declares, “Praise

the Lord! My mind is girded up with one goal. My emotion is fully set on one person, the Lord Himself. I have no other object of my love. Therefore, my will follows to make a strong decision: I am for the Lord, and I am for the Lord's recovery. I don't care for anything else." This is obedience to the truth. Such an obedience to the truth becomes the means by which we purify our souls.

In verse 22 Peter says that we purify our souls by our obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love. Since the purification of our souls concentrates our entire being on God that we may love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Mark 12:30), such purifying issues in unfeigned brotherly love. We love from a pure heart fervently all those whom God loves. First, God's regeneration issues in a holy living. Then His sanctification (purification) issues in brotherly love.

What does the word unfeigned mean? It means not to pretend or not to be hypocritical. But in particular, it means not to put on a mask. To feign something is to put on a mask to disguise how we really feel. It is to pretend to be something that we are not. Unfeigned brotherly love is brotherly love that is genuine, without

pretense; it is brotherly love without any kind of mask. In 1 Peter 1:22 the adjective *unfeigned* is very important. It indicates that through the purification of our soul, all the masks have been taken away.

Many times the saints may put on masks in the church life. They may love one another, but it is a love with a mask. The reason for this feigned love is that these saints have not purified their souls. They have not girded up the loins of their mind, concentrated their emotion, and made a strong decision with their will concerning the recovery. Therefore, everything they do is with a mask. They may realize that as long as they are in the church life, they need to behave in a loving way. But inwardly they are doubting, and their souls, including the mind, the emotion, and the will, have been polluted. These saints need to purify their souls by obeying the truth.

When we have purified our souls by our obedience to the truth, we can love one another from a pure heart fervently. In verse 22 we have both the purifying of the soul and love from a pure heart. To love from a pure heart is to have a love that comes not only from the parts of the soul but also from the conscience. Our conscience testifies that we love the brothers with an

unfeigned love. When our conscience has this kind of testimony, we love from a pure heart. But if our conscience does not confirm our love or testify concerning it, then our love is merely from the soul.

Since we have been regenerated in this way, we need to care for the seed within us, and we should not care for any dissenting talk from those who oppose the Lord's recovery. Instead of listening to the words of dissenting ones, we need to pay attention to the seed. We should check everything with the seed in us.

Furthermore, with this seed within us as the basis, this seed received through regeneration, we need to purify our soul. Do not listen to the dissenting talk of religionists. Instead, pay attention to the inward seed. Gird up your mind, concentrate your emotion, and strengthen your will. Then make a strong decision for the Lord's recovery. This is what it means to purify our soul. If you purify your soul in this way, the result will be unfeigned brotherly love.

Word in verse 23 is logos, referring to the constant word. Word here is rhema (twice), referring to the instant word. When the logos is spoken to us, it becomes rhema. In verse 25 it is the word of the Lord that abides forever. Lord refers to God in verse 23.

This indicates that the Lord Jesus is God. In verse 25 Peter speaks of “the word which has been announced to you as the gospel.” The word announced by the apostles is the gospel that regenerates the believers.

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Note: This version is not intended to be printed as material for pursuit during the small group gathering. Instead, it is to be used as additional reference for brothers and sisters who want to prepare in advance for fellowship on the message. We include here notes from the commentaries of the brothers in the life-study radio program. The points from these commentaries can help enrich our understanding and, eventually, our fellowship with the saints on the selected portions of the life-study message. We still recommend that, if possible, the saints still listen to the [audio message](#) in addition to reading the [life-study message](#) for personal pursuit and for preparation for small group gatherings. We also wish to point out that these notes have not been fully polished.

[Commentary]:

Introduction

[CW]: As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we accept the Bible as truth. John 17 says, specifically, "*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.*" And so when we come to verses such as John 3:16, for example, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,*" we take that as truth without question. But are we satisfied merely to accept the objective fact that God surely loves us, or have we, in fact, experienced His love in a personal and subjective way? The apostle Peter was one who no doubt knew the objective teaching of God's love, but it must have been his very deep and personal experience and appreciation of the loving Savior that prompted him to write in the deeply personal and experiential manner that we find in his New Testament epistles. Bob Danker has joined us today as we continue our fellowship in the life study of First Peter. Good to have you, Bob.

[BD]: Good to be back, Chris. This epistle, especially at the beginning here, is really marvelous. It really shows us God's full salvation, beginning with our being chosen in eternity past by God the Father, our being redeemed by God the Son from our vain manner of life, our being regenerated by the Father in the resurrection of Christ through the living and abiding word of God, and our purifying our souls again through the word of the truth, as you mentioned. So we can see that in God's full salvation, God's word is very crucial. And God's word is the word of truth. That means everything in God's word should become a reality to us in our experience.

[CW]: Bob, as you pointed out in these early verses in chapter one, Peter really does set forth some of the great and profound truths in the New Testament revelation, but he's not doing it in the way of a doctrinal treat us. He just don't get that feeling. In fact, there's much feeling that comes with these marvelous truths. And as we see today, when we get a little farther along in the chapter, there's an outcome, there's an outflow of the reality of these things, isn't there?

[BD]: There really is. And as you mentioned, I think already it's this is really our love for the brothers, our brotherly love. This is the result of our receiving God's word as the truth.

[CW]: Let's look at verse 22, the one you're referring to, "*Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently,*" And instead unto, I think, is a word we want to draw to attention today. That means that what has gone before is going to produce something. It's going to yield something. And that's the kind of brotherly love that's really being spoken of here, isn't it? That's right, Chris, all right, when we join Witness Lee, and then we'll come back for some more fellowship Bob.

Part 1

[CW]: Bob, I like to keep the sequence here intact. The outcome that we're looking toward is this unfeigned love of the brothers. But the process here involves a kind of a purifying of our souls by obedience to the truth. And I really love the practical definition that he gave us of the truth that is really at work here. Why don't you pick this point up?

[BD]: Well, Chris, the truth here, of course, as Witness Lee pointed out, really means the reality. God's word is filled with things that are real. What it conveys to us are not dreams, imaginations, even mere teachings. It conveys reality to us in the very words of the scriptures. And this reality is really the Triune God Himself, plus all that He has planned for us, all that He has done for us, and all that He will do for us, and all that He is to us, all of these as reality is conveyed and contained in the Word of God. When we receive God's word, not as doctrine or teaching, but we receive the very reality that's conveyed in this word, this reality causes us to set our entire being on God, on what He is doing for us in His purpose and in His plan. So our soul, our mind, emotion and will are spontaneously purified from all things other than God. All the things that defile our soul are the things that are outside of God and outside of God's economy. But God's word conveys to us the reality of God and the reality of His divine economy, which causes our soul to be separated from all the things that are not God Himself, and focused and concentrated on God, this produces a purifying in our mind, our emotion and our will, which are the three parts of our soul.

[CW]: One of the words that struck me in this portion, he used the word mask related to the opposite of the word unfeigned. We're talking about love Bob. It seems that our society today, and even our Christian society, masks play a big role, don't they?

[BD]: That's right, Chris. Actually, society in the world is full of masks, full of pretense, full of hypocrisy and full of falsehood. But God's word is filled with reality, and God Himself is absolutely pure without any kind of pretense. And this is what we touch when we receive the Word of God. We touch something pure without any pretense, without any kind of mask, and something that is absolutely real and not in the least false.

[CW]: This kind of experience, obviously, is based on the objective truth that's something that is outside of us. It's in God. It's in Christ. It was accomplished historically, but it becomes real in our experience to the extent that even the masks and things that we veil ourselves with, oftentimes we veil ourselves from ourselves. But the result of the real working of this Spirit of reality, the Spirit of truth in us, is that these are removed layer by layer until eventually, as you said, all pretense is gone, all falseness is gone, and something that is the purity of God itself becomes manifest even in our being.

[BD]: Isn't that marvelous? This is the effect of the Word of God on our inner being.

[CW]: We're not talking about a kind of brotherly love that is based on mere human sentiment things like this. We're really talking about the essence of God Himself. Bob let's look at this verse again, and then I want to go back to an earlier verse in chapter one to help set up this coming portion again, it says, "Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth," now let's jump back to verse 13. And verse 13 begins with therefore, or in some translations, "*Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind and being sober, set your hope perfectly on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Let's circle back to Witness Lee and see how the two passages are related.

Part 2

[CW]: Bob, we have the result here of this unfeigned, this unpretentious, pure love, and it's also coming from a fervent heart. That means a heart that's full of emotion. If we want to experience this kind of love, we need more than just the mere study of religious teaching and doctrine, don't we?

[BD]: That's right, what we need Chris is the word of truth, the very reality that's contained and conveyed in God's sanctifying word, as you mentioned, this reality is just God Himself, His very essence. And we know that God is love. So the genuine, unpretentious, unfeigned love in this whole universe is God Himself. And through his word, God conveys His very essence into our being. This has a profound effect on our souls. Our souls are purified through

this word of God. All the impurity that's in our soul comes from our soul being mixed with things of the world, worldly thoughts, fleshly desires, etc. Our soul is not pure. It has foreign elements within it. All these foreign things need to be purged away, and God Himself needs to be dispensed into our inward being. How can this be done? Only through the sanctifying Word of God, which is the word of truth. When we read the Word and we acknowledge, even with prayer, with thanksgiving, with praise to the Lord, all the realities that are contained in His Word. And there are many mentioned here, this first part of First Peter, chapter one, such as we were chosen by God the Father, we were regenerated unto a living hope, and so many truths are here. We should receive these things, not just as teachings, but as reality, and we should acknowledge them, and inwardly, we should submit ourselves in obedience to all these truths in the Word of God.

[CW]: Bob, I think it's fair to mention that some of Witness Lee's critics would sometimes pick up this language about not emphasizing the objective study of Scripture, and use that to criticize, to say that he didn't believe in Bible study, you know, didn't promote studying Bible. I know, you know better because of the years you spent with him. He was the man who took the word of God of all manner of ways in particular he spent much time studying the Bible.

[BD]: Of course, Chris, he spent his whole life from the very day he was saved until the time he went to the Lord, more than 70 years on one book, that book is the Bible. I would say that probably no man who ever lived understood the Bible better than Witness Lee did. Even in the letter, even in the outward teachings of the Bible. One thing to me is striking concerning Witness Lee and his ministry, and that is what he ministers from the word is not mere teaching, it's a reality. You are impressed his ministry with much more than mere doctrine. You are impressed with reality. Reality touches you, and even enters into you through God's word. This is marvelous.

[CW]: It is marvelous. He, of course, frequently pointed out he learned it from Watchman Nee, who was his mentor. But brought the same sort of emphasis to the word, yes, the study what the word was there, but to bring us all into the reality of the word, and not just the mere study of the doctrines and things, as you said, to take the word in a prayerful and sometimes Witness Lee would use the word to muse over the word. And of course, if we read the biographies of so many of servants of the Lord over the centuries, these kinds of things come up frequently, don't they? We see this approach more often than not.

[BD]: Yes, we need to receive the word as reality, and I like this word obedience. Obeying the truth. This calls for something from us as a response and that is our obedience. We may understand what the Bible says, but the question is, do we obey the word says. And I never met a man who was more obedient to the Word of God than our brother Witness Lee. It's our obedience, not just our understanding, that means we order our lives according to the truths in the word. We live and walk according to these truths in obedience to them, that's what purifies our soul and issues in an unfeigned love for the brothers.

[CW]: Let's go into verse 23, *"Having been regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God."* This matter of the living and abiding word of God, I think will touch a portion today.

Part 3

[CW]: Bob a moment ago, when we were talking about that previous point, you were quite strong about this matter of obedience of the truth. Here we find out that this obedience must be based upon the seed of the divine life that's contained in the word, wasn't it?

[BD]: That's right, we in ourselves, of course, are rebels and we are opposers of God. But now we have been regenerated of His incorruptible seed, and that seed is His divine life, which was conveyed to us through and in His

living word. Now we have another gene in us, the gene of God Himself, in His incorruptible, eternal life. And that life supplies us when we come to the word and we read it and we touch the word as reality, this life within us responds to that word and gives us the desire to say amen to that word and to live according to it. It not only gives us the desire, it gives us the power, the inward energy of the divine life, to conform to God's word. And all of this works together the Lord's word of reality with the seed of the eternal life within us to cause our soul to be purified. And this results in our loving the brothers with an unfeigned love.

[CW]: When we begin to come to the word in this way, not merely satisfied to study it in an outward, objective way, like we would study a history text. It has the effect also of cultivating our spiritual appetite, doesn't it? And you know, that is when our hunger for the Word really begins to increase. Oftentimes, we battle this in our Christian lives, don't we?

[BD]: That's right! We need to have a hunger begin to come to the word in this way, not merely satisfied to study it in an outward, objective way, like we would study a history text. It has the effect also of cultivating our spiritual appetite, doesn't it? And you know, that is when our hunger for the Word really begins to increase. Oftentimes, we battle this in our Christian lives, don't we?

[BD]: That's right! We need to have a hunger that never wanes and even increases for the living Word of God. God's word is so sweet to our taste, it's so nourishing to our inner man. It does require something of us, there's no doubt about that, but it also supplies us with God's essence, God Himself, to enable us to meet its requirement. It's quite marvelous, so that eventually we live together in the church, the Body of Christ, with an unfeigned love for the brothers. You can see there's a corporate life implied here. Now we're not just individual Christians experiencing salvation ourselves, but God's goal is to have the church as the Body of Christ. For this, we need an unfeigned love.

[CW]: Of course, Peter is going to come to this when he talks about a spiritual habitation of God being built up and identifying even us as the living stones for the building. But he's laying a good foundation, you can tell that even in the way he has structured his epistle, isn't he?

[BD]: He surely is.

[CW]: Oh Bob, I'm really enjoying this life study of First Peter and I am looking forward as we go further into these verses and as we've said now in these first ten programs again and again for a so called uneducated fisherman, Peter touches some profound and deep thoughts and conveys in a truly marvelous way throughout his writings isn't he?

[BD]: Absolutely!

[CW]: Well we look for the Lord's operation in us to operate in the same way and give us a kind of understanding in entering into the heart of the apostle as he opens up this deep things of God. We hope that you'd be with us for all of the programs in the coming weeks as we continue on in First and Second Peter and we'll be back next week.

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