

“Lower Thirds” Material

1/10/21

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One of the most well-researched human motives is our need to belong.

Any threat to social attachments can lead to three destructive emotions—*anxiety, depression, and jealousy*. (Baumeister & Leary, p. 506, 1995)

Supreme Court Justice, Samuel Alito: “I assume that those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in the recesses of their homes, but if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers, and schools.”

1 Peter 4:12 *Don't be surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.*

2:12 falsely accused; **3:16** slandered; **4:4** maligned

Living as *God's elect exiles (1:1)* is hard, and it's going to get harder.

2:1 – Christians tempted to engage in *malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander*

Hurt people hurt people - not an option for Christ followers.

The Judeo-Christian heritage of the American state does not make America the New Israel.

How can we avoid the destructive emotions of not belonging, when, in this world, we no longer belong?

1:3 *We were born again into a living hope.*

We have everything we need for life and godliness, because Christianity is not just a set of moral obligations; it's a vital, dynamic relationship with the living God.

“born again” = conception

We have God's spiritual DNA in us! Our identity has been radically changed! We are now partakers of the divine nature (cf. **2 Peter 1:4**).

We belong to God and his forever family.

Having grounded our living hope and holy living in God's character and Christ's precious blood in **1:1-21**, Peter turns to its ultimate expression in our lives—*our love for one another* (cp. **John 13:34-35**)

1:22-25 *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 have 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.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

1:22a *Having purified your souls* – Greek perfect tense: a past reality with present and ongoing/permanent results; initial to final salvation

1:22b *By your obedience to the truth* – cp. **1:2** - *obedience to Jesus for sprinkling with his blood* = believing the Gospel

1:22c *FOR a sincere brotherly love* – a central purpose for which God saved us is so that we love one another

The permanent purification of our soul is not only life-giving; it's love-generating. (cp. **Acts 26:20**)

1:23b *Through the living and abiding word of God (1:24 - the word of the Lord) does not, primarily, refer to the Bible but, specifically, to the gospel of Christ and even to Christ himself.*

1:25 *This word is the good news we preached to you!*

1:23a *You have been born again - Greek perfect tense; word-picture = conception; an imperishable seed*

Through Christ's Spirit, God implanted his life inside us.

Isaiah 61 *a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor*

We have within us, as believers in Christ, God's own seed to bring forth life after its own kind.

The new creation has broken into the old, and it's happening inside us!

Christ's life implanted in us, is like a living seed; it will grow, if we don't poison or neglect it, but instead, nurture it. (cp. **John 15**)

2:1-3 *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 (since) you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

These community-destroying vices are not only being tolerated in the church, they are being championed.

- *Malice* – the desire to do evil to another, ill-will; frequently joined with bitterness, grumbling, and envy
- *Deceit* – speaking and acting with ulterior motives
- *Hypocrisy* – hiding one's true self behind a mask to manipulate others
- *Envy* – a feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or advantage
- *Slander* – making a false accusation that damages a person's reputation; frequently done through malicious gossip

2:1 *Lay aside* = point-in-time action, a decisive moment

Colossians 3:16 - be richly indwelt with the word of Christ

Romans 13:14 - *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*

Ephesians 4:22-24 - *put off the old self and put on the new self, created after Christ's own holy and righteous heart*

Ephesians 6:10ff - *put on the full armor of God* (cf. **Isaiah** - Messiah's armaments – i.e., put on Christ)

2:4 *As you come to him...* that's not doctrinal; it's personal.

2:2 *Since you tasted that the Lord is good* (cf. **Psalm 34**; cp. **Psalm 112**)

In other NT epistles, "milk" is used as a metaphor for basic teaching to new converts and their need to grow up to digest the meat of the word (e.g., **Hebrews 5:13**; **1 Corinthians 3:1-3**; **Colossians 3:1-2**).

Peter is speaking, here, about our vital dependence on God throughout our Christian lives. (cp. **John 15** "You can do nothing apart from me!")

Got Milk? Milk does a "Body" good.

Meditate on, pray through, immerse yourself in, worship Jesus through, master these passages: **Romans 1-3**; **Galatians 1-3**; **Ephesians 1-3**; **Philippians 1-3**; **Colossians 1-3**.

Then, realize that the gospel revealed in chapters 1-3, is not simply to amaze our minds, but to change our lives. Doctrine is ALWAYS for devotion.

Grow up in salvation and run the race set before us as kingdom-class athletes!

Benjamin Franklin - "We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately." **1 Peter 5:8** *The devil prowls around like as a roaring lion seeking someone he may devour.*