

HOPEFULLY

(Standing firm in the hope and encouragement of the Grace of God)

Lesson Three: Reasons for Pulling Together

Introduction

- A. The mark of the Christian should be unity and love for one another (John 17:23, 13:35).
- B. New Birth is personal, but we must consider that being born again makes a part of the family of God.

WE ARE A FAMILY! (v.22)

- A. There is a connection here between two of the instructions that Peter gives us in these verses – **“Love one another deeply from the heart,”** (v.22) and **“crave pure spiritual milk.”** (2:2)
- B. To fully accomplish the first, we must deeply desire the second.
- C. The intention of God has always been to build the Church.

UNITY

- A. According to Jesus!
 - 1. Jesus taught and modeled the importance of unity.
 - 2. At the Last Supper, Jesus assumed the role of a servant and washed the disciple’s feet.
 - 3. In verses 34-35 He shifts from **“feet washing”** to **“love”** for each other.
 - 4. Later, around the campfire He prayed a remarkable prayer for unity (John 17:9-11).
- B. According to Paul!
 - 1. The thought of unity is interwoven in all of Paul’s teaching.
 - 2. Philippians 2:3-4
 - 3. How many problems could be solved if we lived by this word.
 - 4. My understanding of scripture is that **LOVE NEVER FAILS**, but **WE FAIL TO LOVE**.

WHAT MAKES LOVE POSSIBLE! (1 Peter 1:22-2:2)

- A. Three things pop out of this passage: **obedience to the truth**, **purity of soul** and a **lack of hypocrisy**.

1. Absolute obedience to the truth of God's Word and keeping that Word alive in our hearts makes love for one another possible.
 2. Obedience to the truth has a purifying effect on us. It purges us of prejudice, resentment, hurt feelings, and grudges.
 3. This purity of soul helps us love one another without hypocrisy.
- B. Notice the progression of verse 23.
1. The secret and source of the whole matter is being "***born again.***"
 2. We are a new creature with new motives to guide us.
 3. Two things are associated with New Birth: **Truth and Love.**
 - Truth through which divine influence comes.
 - Love then is expressed.

WHAT KEEPS LOVE STRONG!

- A. Selfishness, deceit, hypocrisy and flattery are often hidden under the cloak of love – for this reason Peter tells us to "***fervently love one another from the heart.***"
1. There is passion here. A strong emotional commitment.
 2. Two Greek words are predominantly used in the New Testament to describe love.
 - Philo – brotherly love or a warm friendship.
 - Agape – divine type of love.
 3. Why does Peter seem to say that salvation produces one kind of love (Philo) and then command us to exercise another kind of love (agape)?
 - God provides the essential for agape in salvation.
 - However, it is attained by our obedience to God's Word and our diligent striving to please Him.
 - Love begins by obedience to the Word (1:22) and it continues to grow by our obedience to the Word (2:5-7).
- B. Love "***from the heart.***"
1. That means with a pure heart.
 2. **We have been chosen by the Father, set apart by the Holy Spirit and cleansed by the shed blood of the Jesus and given a living hope.**

3. We are to fix our hope on the Word of God which provides purification of our soul.
4. This purification makes love possible without selfishness and ambition of the flesh.
5. There is a relationship between the nature of the New Birth and the nature of Christian love. New Birth was wrought by the “**seed**” of the Word of God. That seed is living and abiding forever. Because the seed lasts forever, so should our love.
6. The offspring should have the same nature as the “**seed**” which produced it.

ACTING LIKE A FAMILY!

- A. We have the same Father (v.23a).
- B. We take our instruction from the same source (vs.23b -25).
- C. We have our struggles in the same realm (v. 2:1) These attitudes are the most frequent barriers to good relationships.
- D. We focus our attention on the same objective (vs. 2-3).

Conclusion

- A. There is a vital connection between love for one another and craving pure spiritual milk.
- B. The metaphor of “**spiritual milk**” means continual maturity.
- C. Understanding of the Word and loving one another are co-dependents.