"A FERVENT LOVE"

I Peter 1:22-25
10-31-2021

INTRODUCTION:

***"Love one another with a pure heart fervently"** **(v. 22)**

How can we sincerely love one another? Where does this capacity to love come from?

2 prerequisites to having *"agape"* love:

I. A PURIFIED SOUL (v. 22)

II. A NEW BIRTH (v. 23-25)

Features of the new birth:

A. The new birth is not of human origin (v. 23a, 24)
"not of corruptible seed"

B. The new birth is accomplished by the eternal Word of God (v. 23b, 25)
"by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"

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INTRODUCTION:

"Behold! How they love one another."
One of the most profound comments made regarding the early church came from the lips of a man named Aristides, sent by the Emperor Hadrian to spy out those strange creatures known
as "Christians." Having seen them in action, Aristides returned with a mixed report. But his immortal words to the emperor have echoed down through history: "Behold! How they love one another."

- Chuck Swindol

As the second century of Christianity began to unfold, the faith had spread throughout the Roman Empire—particularly to some of its great cities, like Rome and Carthage in North Africa. At that time, Christians were the objects of great suspicion from their neighbors and government officials because they had given up the behaviors of their previously pagan lifestyle.

Wildrumorshadbeguntocirculateinsomeplacesaboutwhat Christiansactuallytaught and did in their meetings together. To clear the air and defend the good name of Christianity, a church leader in Carthage named Tertullian wrote a brief explanation of Christian practices and a critique of the unjust accusations that had been made against them. In his work, he wrote at one point that these attacks against Christianity were made out of jealousy, because Christians displayed a character of life that their pagan neighbors did not possess. His statement highlighted a quality that will be the focus of our study of 1 Peter today.

Here is what Tertullian wrote: "It is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See how they love one another, they say, for they themselves are animated by mutual hatred; how they are ready even to die for one another, they say, for they themselves will sooner put to death (The Apology, ch. 39)."

The key thought in verses 22 - 25 is given by God in an imperative - ***"Love one another"***

V. 22

"Love" - *agapao* - God's love (Jn. 3:16; Ro. 5:8)

A choosing to meet someone else's need without the quest for personal benefit.

The fact that God commands us to love shows:

1) Love is an act of the will (it's a choice, a decision)

2) Love is not always "automatic" (the capacity comes automatically upon salvation, but the actual exercise of such love does not)

3) We are responsible to start loving (aorist imperative)
(don't wait for a "lightning bolt" from Heaven to get you going; decide to begin the acts of love today!)

Agape love is God's love and therefore it has the power to:
1. Forgive
2. Overlook differences

SEE: I Cor. 13

"One another" - a reciprocal love is expected. There is not to be a "one way street" among believers.

"With a pure heart" - (KJV) - Not "Hellywood" love

"With a pure heart" - from a heart which is sincere and unhypocritical.

The source of love is not merely from the *"lips"* (Mt. 12:34; 15:8), but from the heart.

"Fervently" - lit. to "stretch out" (the word was used of the muscles of a race horse being stretched to the limits as it crosses the finish line).

God is describing a love that reaches out; that intensely, strenuously, and earnestly goes the extra mile, or goes out of its way, expending much energy and effort to reach out to a brother in need.

The opposite of a "fervent" love is a "cold" love; in the last days God said that the love of many would *"wax cold"* (Mt. 24:12).

Since Peter commands the fruit of love, it is important for him to give us the root (or source) of this love.

"What you love and what you hate reveal what you are (your inner character)" (Bob Jones, Sr.)

***"Love one another with a pure heart fervently"** **(v. 22)**

How can we sincerely love one another? Where does this capacity to love come from?

2 prerequisites to having *"agape"* love:

I. A <u>PURIFIED</u> <u>SOUL</u> (v. 22)

***"Purified"* -** perfect tense indicates a reality that occurred in the past that has continuing results.

The ***"Purity"*** is moral not ritual, internal not external, spiritual not physical.

***"Ye have purified"* -** Not teaching a works salvation (by human effort), but the resultant cleansing that occurred when you believed.

Peter, knowing full well that Christ does the saving of a soul, looks at salvation from the perspective of the responsibility of man to believe.

Peter acknowledged that God purifies hearts *"by faith"* (Acts 15:9).

"Purified your <u>souls</u>" - The most important cleansing anyone can have is that of his/her innermost being (the "*soul"* which is our most valuable possession [Mark 8:36-37] is that invisible, immaterial aspect of people that is the essence of our life.

When God created man, he became a *"living soul."*

The soul is that aspect of man which gives us life, and determines the quality of our life.

When Adam sinned, his soul became stained, polluted, and defiled with sin.

Man's soul became self-centered. No longer did his soul motivate him to please God, but to please self. When one becomes saved, however, his soul is made holy (*hagnizo)* (sanctified or set apart from self-centeredness). We now have a capacity to really love, to love unselfishly.

"Obeying" - (*hupokuou)* = to "listen under"; or to hear with a submissive spirit. To listen with an intent to respond; to hear in order to heed.

"The truth" - is the *"gospel"* (v. 25). The truth submitted to is the substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection of Christ according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 15:3-4).

Love is always anchored to faith. True faith must precede true love.

Why, faith in God's love for us is the motive to us having a love for Him and others (I Jn. 4:19 - *"We love him, because he first loved us."*)

"Through the Spirit" - (KJV) It is by means of the Holy Spirit that our hearts were made responsive to the truth we heard. The Holy Spirit cut right down deep to the *"dividing asunder of soul and spirit"* (Heb. 4:12), using the Word of God as His sword (Eph. 6:17), and opened our heart to receive the truth (Acts 16:14).

Hence, we have been born of the Spirit (Jn. 3:6-8; Ti. 3:5).

The Holy ***"Spirit"***

prompted you to respond to the ***"truth"***

which resulted in the <u>purifying</u> of your ***"soul"***

which enables us to have an ***"unfeigned love"***

"Unto" - This word points to the <u>outcome</u> of a purified soul. The result of the new birth is a new capacity to love.

"Unfeigned" - unpretended; unhypocritical, sincere, genuine love. Someone can pretend to have true love (I Cor. 13:2-3); but one who is genuinely born again does not have to pretend it.

At salvation, God gives us the "real thing!"

There is a kind of 'success psychology' popular today that enables a person to subtly manipulate others in order to get what he wants. If our love is sincere and from a pure heart, we could never 'use people' for our own advantage" (Wiersbe, p. 400).

"Love of the brethren" = one word in the Greek - *"philadelphian"* - A brother-love; an affectionate relation to fellow believers who are in the same spiritual family.

The new birth brings us into a new family, and those in the family will have a love for their brothers and sisters. Just as a love for one's genetic brothers and sisters automatically comes naturally, a love for our spiritual brothers and sisters also automatically comes, supernaturally.

II. A NEW BIRTH (v. 23-25)

V. 23

"Being born again" - (perfect, passive, participle) lit. "having been born again"; having already received the new birth. Having been regenerated at a point in the past and abiding in that state.

"Being born again" - This passive participle proves that the birth does not originate with man. It is a work of God.

With the new birth comes a new nature (II Pet. 1:4).

The one who partakes of the "new life" of God also partakes of the loving character of God. He gives us His nature (the Spirit) and His example; and such should

prompt a response of love for God and for others (especially those who belong to God).

Having "love" for God and others is an inseparable, distinguishable mark or evidence of the new birth (SEE: I John 3:10-18; 4:7-8, 11-13, 20).

The participle modifies the imperative to *"love"*.

Love with the capacity you were given at the time of your new birth.

"New life brings new love" (a new love from self and others).

"Love one another" - "Peter was anxious for his readers to unlock the floodgates so t hat the full stream of love might gush forth." (Hiebert, p. 113).

Features of the new birth:

A. The new birth is not of human origin (v. 23a, 24)
"not of corruptible seed"

V. 23
The "new birth" did not originate from corruptible (perishable) seed (i.e. not from natural, procreation. It did not come genetically from your earthly parents (Jn. 1:13).

The "seed" of a human father will beget (give birth to) life that is perishable; however, the "seed" of our Heavenly Father begets life that is impossible.

V. 24
All flesh (all natural born, mortal, physical flesh) has a limited life-span.
Like grass and flowers, the flesh of man, though it may have a temporal

"glory" (beauty, splendor) but it eventually *"withereth"* (drys up and wrinkles) and *"falleth away"* (lit. falls out or down or dies).

B. The new birth is accomplished by the eternal Word of God (v. 23b, 25)
"by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"

The "new birth" came about in your life out of *(ek)* the imperishable (incorruptible) Word *(logos)* of God.

God's Word is likened unto *"seed"* - imperishable seed.

The "seed" when planted (witnessing), accepted by the soil (the heart); and germinated (believed), gives life, growth, and fruit! (Mt. 13).

(NOTE: These are 3 proofs of someone who has been born again by the Word)

The potency of love is based not on a temporal message of man, but on the eternal word of God.

"By the Word of God" - Peter (under inspiration) digresses a bit and discloses the eternal nature of God's Word.

No one is born again without the *"Word of God"*. Whenever someone has a "born again" experience, if their hearing and believing the Word of God is not part of their testimony, they were not "born again" by God. They may have had an "experience", but they did not have the "new birth."

God's Word is not dead nor will it ever die.

Two words attest to this fact:

--*"Liveth"* - right now the Word is alive
(Heb. 4:12 - *"For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even tot he diving asunder of*

soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.")

--*"Abideth"* - to remain, to last, to stay without dying off

V. 25

"But" in contrast to man whose life ends, *"the Word (rhema)"* of the Lord remains into the eternal ages.

What God says (His spoken word) will never cease, never end, never die, never perish.

And this eternal Word is the same word which was proclaimed or preached unto you.

God's Word will never go out of existence and never fail.

Is. 40: 8 - *"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.*

Is. 55:11 - *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*"

Is. 59:21 - *"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."*

He promised to preserve His Word, and He has!

Forever, "*Thy word is settled in heaven*

Mt. 5:18 - *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

THE BIBLE STANDS

The Bible stands
Like a rock undaunted
Midst the raging storms of time.
Its pages burn with a truth eternal
And they glow with a light sublime.

The Bible stands
Though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand
Though the earth shall crumble,
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands
The Bible stands

CONCLUSION:

The Holy ***"Spirit"***

prompted you to respond to the ***"truth"***

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