

**Bumper** – Before Christmas we were in a study in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter–**GLOW** – and I'd like for us to pick up where we left off.

When something **glows** it *emits* a steady radiance of light. In 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, we learn as Christians, we're called to **GLOW** by emitting the radiance of Christ to the world around us.

The essential ingredient to **GLOWING** is found in having a vibrant personal relationship w/ Christ in salvation – walking in the Spirit – surrendered to God's Word living out the Great Commission to go into all the world in His name.

As a reminder, when Peter penned these words, Christians were under great duress due to the tyrannical rule of Nero. If you remember, after Rome burned in A.D. 64, Nero blamed the Christians. So even before the fires in Rome were extinguished, the fires of persecution against Christians began to spread. So Peter wrote to encourage believers.

Meaning this letter was intended to exhort the church to not shrivel up and hide but to be a city on a hill to shine brightly for God's glory – *strangers on a mission of grace*.

This AM were going to pick up in **ch. 1:21** to talk about the (4) critical elements essential to having a **GLOWING** faith.

*Through Him you **believe** in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your **faith** and **hope** are in God. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the **truth** so that you have sincere **love** for your brothers, love one another deeply from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you. Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted the Lord is good. 1 Peter 1:21-2:3*

In this text we find the quartet of *faith, hope, love, and truth*. As mentioned, **Faith** is the lead singer. **Hope** hits the high notes. **Love** unites the voices. **Truth** lays the foundation.

## I Faith EMANCIPATES

*Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith/hope are in God.*

**It's our belief in the death, burial, and resurrection that sets us free.** Our belief is our *dependent response* to God's grace that pulls us from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of His Son – setting us free from sin and into a relationship w/ God (**Colossians 1:13-14**).

**believe** (*pistos*) to be persuaded to place one's confidence and lean one's entire weight on – it refers to one who has placed their trust in Christ w/out reservation.

We call this exercise of belief – **FAITH**. In faith we're responding to God's initiative to rescue us from the wages of sin. The writer of Hebrews reminds us of what faith is and why it is essential to our lives.

*Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.... w/out faith it is impossible to please God, b/c anyone who comes to him must believe he exists and he rewards those who earnestly seek him. 11:1, 6*

So faith is our **confident belief** in God that's anchored in truth, expectant in times of testing, and dependent on God for direction/provision – *it's our spiritual language w/ God.*

**Faith is like a coin** – while faith is faith, there are two sides to faith – **saving faith** and **living faith**.

**Saving Faith** is the faith we exercise to trust Christ as Savior. Once we experience the prompting/conviction of the H.S. – faith is our **trusting response** that leads us into the spiritual transaction of salvation. It's when our faith collides w/ His grace that we exchange *our sin for His mercy – our condemnation for His justification.*

**HOW:** The H.S. engages a person at their point of need to *convict* them by *convincing* them of their need for grace; and then, as a person exercises faith in the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ – the H.S. *converts* the person from a sinner into a saint. So faith is our trusting response to God's initiating grace that culminates in our conversion.

**Living Faith** is the trust every believer expresses day-by-day whereby they align themselves under God's Word and respond in obedience to God's will.

The same faith that saves us is the same faith that keeps us – b/c the Christian life requires confident dependence on God.

## II Hope ENCOURAGES

**Hope** can best be summed up in an acrostic – **H**aving **O**nly **P**ositive **E**xpectation! Hope is the expectation of life Jesus spoke of in **John 10:10**. It is living today in the anticipation of what God is doing and will do tomorrow until His return.

## IV Love ENGAGES

*...you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

To grasp the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of this instruction – *to love* – one must understand the 1<sup>st</sup> half of this verse – *obeying the truth*.

Peter calls us to love but explains there's a trigger to loving others – and that's a true conversion where a person responds to the call of God and receives Christ.

obeying (*hupoakoe*) to hear under and to respond in kind.

**Important** – (1) Who's speaking? It is implied that God is speaking about the gift of Jesus for salvation. (2) What's being asked? We're being asked to respond to the truth of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus as God's solution to the problem of sin. The **TRUTH** refers to the Cross and grace – yet it's our faith response that triggers salvation and our ability to love one another as Jesus has loved us.

When a person is saved, immediately they're indwelt by the H.S. As a result, the same God who so love the world now lives in them wanting to love others as Jesus loves them. Meaning – we can now truly love b/c God first loved us.

A WHO are Believers to Love?

While believers are to love everyone, in particular, we're to sincerely love one another in the church – the *brethren*.

sincere (*anupokriton*) w/out hypocrisy; w/out a mask. As we genuinely care for each other w/ a love that unites us for the sake of the Gospel – the world will be drawn to Christ in us.

This idea echoes Jesus' words to His disciples in John 13 - *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

## B HOW are Believers to Love?

We're to love (*agape*) unconditionally (*ektenos*) fervently. It means we're to love one another to the furthest extent of our own human ability in sync w/ God's ability w/in us.

## C WHY are Believers to Love?

We're to love fervently/unconditionally to the fullest extent b/c it's consistent w/ our new life in Christ. We can't help but to love one another b/c God's love must others. We love b/c we've been loved – and such love authenticates our faith.

## IV Truth ESTABLISHES

The basis of the Christian life is God's Word. God's Word is special revelation w/ the ability to transform a person's life. His Word is the absolute/undeniable truth of God. And it's our response to this Truth that establishes our lives.

*All Scripture is God-breathed (inspired) and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

## A The Word AFFIRMS Our Salvation

*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

God's Word reminds us of the investment God has made in us when we surrendered our life to the Gospel. It reminds us of the deposit the H.S. as a guarantee of our redemption to empower us to live boldly (glow) in this world for God.

## B The Word ADDRESSES Sinfulness

*Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.*

God's Word calls us to live responsibly under the leading of the H.S. in a fallen world by exchanging the old for the new.

rid (*apothemenoi*) to lay aside dirty old clothes in exchange for new, clean clothes. In ancient Christian baptism, when being baptized you'd take off and discard your old garments in exchange for a new robe symbolizing that the old life was gone and a new life had begun.

This is to *purpose* not *perfection*. We've been set apart to live a God-honoring life – which requires we rid ourselves of our earthly influences/inclinations for God's will.

## C The Word ADVANCES Growth/Maturity

*Like newborn babies, **crave** pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may **grow up** in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

It is notable what Peter did NOT command. He didn't charge believers to *read* the Word, *study* the Word, *meditate* on the Word, *teach* the Word, *preach* the Word, *search* the Word, or *memorize* the Word – but to *crave* the Word. *MacArthur*

crave (*epeiotesate*) an imp. verb demanding us to strongly desire/seek the truth. Literally, believers should have a strong spiritual/physical craving for God's Word.

If you have no desire for God's Word, then you have a reason to question the validity of your faith. Why? B/c in salvation, God gives His people a hunger for His truth. Christians are to crave God's Word for one reason – that they might grow to maturity.

may grow (*auxethete*) that *it may grow you*. God's desire is to move from infancy to maturity make us more like Jesus.



*Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted w/ the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity... Hb. 5:13-6:1*

I believe as one matures in the faith, they'll become more discontent w/ the things of this world and more intimate for the things of God. They'll taste and see the Lord is good.

One night several naval vessels were on an exercise where radio silence was being observed. The captain of a battleship saw a light in the distance and realized his ship was on a collision course. Concerned and realizing the distant light wasn't altering its course, the captain broke silence ordering the distant ship to alter its course 10 degrees south. The reply from the distant light encouraged the captain to change his course 10 degrees north. Frustrated, the captain signaled, "I am a captain, change your course 10 degrees south." Shortly thereafter, a reply came back, "I am a seamen 3<sup>rd</sup> class, alter your course 10 degrees north." Angered, the captain said, "I am a battleship, alter your course 10 degrees south." The reply was simple – "Respectfully, Captain... alter your course 10 degrees north – I am a lighthouse."

Too often man thinks he can alter the reality of God, yet God's quartet of faith, hope, love, and truth are God's means to forgiveness and eternity. These four (4) qualities serve as a beacon to guide us to God and to a life of meaning and purpose. Sadly, too many people today are attempting to conjure up a new way thinking they've found a solution apart from God. But in the end, **they'll be forced to alter their course to meet God or suffer the consequences of their arrogance.**