

1 Peter 2:1-3 Sermon — How to Grow After Salvation

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TEXT

1 Peter 2:1-3 “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, **2** As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: **3** If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

INTRODUCTION

Peter is writing to saved people who were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These believers were living as strangers in the world, facing pressure and suffering, and Peter is teaching them how to live faithfully because of the salvation they already have.

Chapter 1 lays the foundation. Peter talks about their faith, their salvation, holiness, loving the brethren, being born again, and the word of God that lives and abides for ever.

Then as we move into chapter 2, Peter begins showing us how people who have been given that new life ought to live. Later in this chapter, Peter is going to explain more about who they are in Christ and how they ought to live. But these first three verses deal with something every believer needs: spiritual growth.

Right before chapter 2, Peter says:

1 Peter 1:23-25 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. **24** For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: **25** But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

Then chapter 2 starts with one little word: Wherefore.

Because of what Peter has already said, here is how these believers ought to live. They have been born again. They have received the word. They have been commanded to love the brethren.

Now Peter gives them three things: lay aside, desire, and grow.

There are things in our lives that need to go. There is something we need to hunger for. And there is growth that should take place after we are saved.

I. LAY ASIDE WHAT CORRUPTS CHRISTIAN LOVE — 1 PETER 2:1

1 Peter 2:1 “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,”

Peter says laying aside. Put these things away.

Malice is wanting hurt or harm for somebody. Guile is deceit. Hypocrisy is pretending to be one thing while really being something else. Envy is resenting somebody because of what they have, what they did, or how they were treated. Evil speaking is using your mouth in a wicked way against somebody.

Peter says all of it needs to go.

Look at what envy did to Saul.

1 Samuel 18:8-9 “And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? **9** And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.”

David did well, and Saul could not stand that David got more praise than he did. From that day forward, Saul started looking at David differently.

That is envy.

Somebody else gets praised. Somebody else gets the opportunity. Somebody else succeeds. Somebody else is noticed. Instead of being glad for them, you start looking at them differently.

Peter says lay that aside.

Then he says all evil speakings. Does that mean a Christian can never say anything negative about anybody? Can a preacher never rebuke somebody? Can we never warn somebody about bad doctrine or sinful behavior?

The Bible answers that.

2 Timothy 4:2 “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

The Bible commands rebuke. So rebuke and evil speaking cannot be the same thing. You can tell somebody they are wrong without speaking evil. You can warn somebody without having malice in your heart.

Jesus also warned about hypocritical correction.

Matthew 7:1-5 “Judge not, that ye be not judged. **2** For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. **3** And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? **4** Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? **5** Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

Jesus did not say the mote should stay in the brother’s eye. He said get the beam out of your own eye first, and then you can see clearly to help your brother.

So do not correct somebody out of malice. Do not rebuke somebody because you envy them. Do not point at somebody else’s problem while you are living like a hypocrite.

Now go back to Peter.

1 Peter 2:1 “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,”

Peter is talking to believers. That means saved people can struggle with these things. If they could not, why would Peter tell them to lay them aside?

So do not turn this verse into, “If somebody has envy, they were never saved.” Peter is talking to born-again people and telling them how born-again people ought to live.

What needs to go in your life? Malice? Envy? Hypocrisy? Deceit? The way you talk about people?

Lay it aside.

II. DESIRE THE WORD SO YOU CAN GROW — 1 PETER 2:2

1 Peter 2:2 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”

Peter says, As newborn babes, desire.

What does a newborn baby do when it is hungry? It wants milk. You do not have to convince that baby to eat. The baby wants it.

Peter says that is how we ought to desire the word of God.

Now some people read newborn babes and milk and immediately think Peter is calling these people immature Christians. Why? Because other passages use milk that way.

Look at Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. **2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. **3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

Paul is rebuking the Corinthians. He says they are carnal. They should be farther along than they are.

Hebrews uses milk the same way.

Hebrews 5:12-13 “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. **13** For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.”

So yes, milk can be used that way.

But is that what Peter is doing?

Read Peter again.

1 Peter 2:2 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”

Peter is not rebuking them for drinking milk. He tells them to desire it.

Notice what he says: As newborn babes, desire. He is pointing to the baby's appetite.

A newborn wants milk. Peter says you ought to want the word of God like that.

And Peter does not say milk means only basic doctrine. There is no meat mentioned here. There is no command to move past the milk. Peter calls it the sincere milk of the word.

God's word is what feeds you.

Psalms 19:7-10 “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. **8** The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. **9** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. **10** More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”

Do you desire the Bible like that?

Do you want to know what God said? When the Bible corrects you, do you want to hear it? When you hear preaching, are you listening for Scripture, or are you just waiting for the service to be over?

Peter says desire it.

Then he tells you why: that ye may grow thereby.

Now somebody may take that and say, “See, you grow into salvation. You have to keep growing to finally be saved.”

No. Look at Peter's order.

First he says they are born again.

1 Peter 1:23 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

Then he tells them to grow.

1 Peter 2:2 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”

Born again first. Growth afterward.

You do not grow until eventually God saves you. You get saved, and then you need to grow.

And growth is not automatic. Peter commands them to desire the word. Corinthians shows saved people who were carnal, envious, and divided.

So if you are not growing, ask yourself: Am I feeding on the word? Am I listening to it? Am I obeying it? Am I holding on to the very sins Peter just told me to lay aside?

Lay aside. Desire. Grow.

III. REMEMBER THAT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS — 1 PETER 2:3

1 Peter 2:3 “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

Peter says, If so be ye have tasted.

Does that mean Peter suddenly doubts whether these people are saved? I do not believe so. Go back to chapter 1. He has already talked about them being born again. He has talked about their faith. He has talked about their love for the brethren.

Peter is pointing them back to something they already know. They have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

You know the Lord has been gracious to you. You know He saved you. So keep desiring His word.

And look at what comes next after our passage. Verse 4 begins talking directly about Christ. So the Lord here is most naturally Jesus Christ.

Peter is telling believers: You have tasted that the Lord is gracious, so keep desiring His word. Keep feeding on it. Keep growing.

You are not growing to get God's grace. You grow because God has already been gracious to you.

CONCLUSION

Peter gives us three simple things.

First, lay aside what needs to go. Malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, evil speaking.

Second, desire the word. Want it like a newborn baby wants milk. Read it. Hear it preached. Learn it. Obey it.

Third, grow thereby. You are not growing so you can finally become saved. Peter is talking to people already born again and telling them to grow.

So ask yourself: What needs to be laid aside? What has happened to your appetite for the word? Are you growing?

Do not feed your envy and starve your Bible reading. Do not hold on to hypocrisy and wonder why you are not growing. Do not spend all week speaking evil and then wonder why your Christian life is weak.

Lay aside what Peter says to lay aside.

Desire the word.

Grow thereby.

The Lord is gracious.

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