

Ministry of Grace Church

1 Peter 1:22-2:8 - Speaker Notes – Slides

Introduction

In the previous portion of 1 Peter chapter one, we learned that after death everyone who has ever lived will be judged by their works. What?! Wait a minute! Did I say that right? Yes, I said that everyone who ever lived will be judged by their works after they die. That doesn't mean that we are saved by works; remember, those of us who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior have already been declared as righteous.

More than that, I count all things to be loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God upon faith, (Philippians 3:8-9)**

Because we are already righteous (not by our actions, but by God's declaration), we will not appear before the Great White Throne Judgment. Only the unsaved will appear there where they will be condemned because of the unrighteousness of their works. Instead, we will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (the Bema Seat) where we will be *rewarded* for our works. But not all of our works will be found praiseworthy, only those which have been done for Him, for His glory.

And, according to Peter, because we have been declared righteous, we are commanded to act like it! He said:

As obedient children, not being conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your conduct; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your sojourn, **(1 Peter 1:14-17)**

Now, I ask you, how did we qualify for this pronouncement of righteousness by God? We qualified by believing the Gospel message. That message, put simply is: All of us are sinners deserving of death. But God who is rich in mercy has declared to us that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and then gave it up to pay the penalty for our sins. If we believe this message and confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, God imputes the righteousness of Jesus to our account.

Another way of saying that God has declared us righteous is to say that when we got saved, our souls were purified. Peter now takes that thought and develops it a bit further.

1 Peter 1:22-25

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a love of the brothers without hypocrisy, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, that is, through the living and enduring 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 off, but the word of the lord endures forever.” And this is the word which was proclaimed to you as good news.

Peter says that our obedience to the truth has purified our souls. “Purified” is the translation of a form of *hagnidzō*, which means “to make clean” or “to purify.” Figuratively, it means “to set apart” or “to sanctify.” In this context it is a reference to our having cleansed our souls from sin. It is expressed here in the perfect tense indicating past completed action with an ongoing effect; we have been cleansed; therefore, we are forever cleansed, forever pure, and we will be able to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ as innocent and righteous.

What Peter is saying is that one of the evidences of obedience to God’s truth is a purification of our souls. That is, when we submit to the knowledge that we are sinners, that God demands purity, and we accept the blood of Christ as payment for our sins, it cleanses us of our sins and we are spiritually purified - we are saved. The evidence of that salvation is displayed by our brotherly love for others. Now that we have attained that level of purity, Peter commands us to take the next step by fervently loving other Christians self-sacrificingly, and to do so sincerely, out of a pure heart.

When asked what the greatest commandment is, Jesus responded to the questioning lawyer with this:

... He said to him, “You shall love the lord your god with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” “This is the great and foremost commandment. “And the second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Matthew 22:37-39)

This is the same message Peter is trying to get across to us in the current passage.

Peter refers to our salvation as us having been “born again.” This term is used in only two places in the Bible, in John 3 where Jesus is talking to Nicodemus and here in **1 Peter 1:22**.

Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. “That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:3-6)

In this passage from John’s gospel account, “born again” is translated from the Greek *genao anothēn*. This literally means “born from above,” which Nicodemus clearly understood to mean “born again,” else he wouldn’t have asked the question he did.

Here, Peter is telling us something about the spiritual life (salvation) that we have. He tells us that the act of being born again is not from the sowing of perishable seed. Our first birth, our physical birth, is from the sowing of perishable seed. The seed of our fathers that produced us would have eventually died and perished if it had not fertilized our mothers’ ovum. But our spiritual birth is the result of an imperishable seed.

This physical life, which is produced from of a perishable seed, is a perishable life. Physically, we will all cease to exist some day. However, the spiritual life, the life we have as a result of the new birth, is produced by imperishable seed. As a result, this new life that we have is not perishable. It will abide ... remain ... endure forever!

Peter now goes on to explain a little more about the corruptible seed. His simile equates the corruptible seed (humanity) with a field full of vegetation. This is the same simile that James used in teaching that riches and rich people are fleeting and temporary.

... because like flowering grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with a scorching heat and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; ... (James 1:10b, 11a)

Both James and Peter are referencing a passage in Isaiah (Isaiah 40:6-8):

A voice says, "Call out." Then he answered, "What shall I call out?" All flesh is grass, and all its lovingkindness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of Yahweh blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

This fleshly life that we live is temporary and passing. It is often referred to as our time of wandering or "sojourning," and it will come to an end. The spiritual life that we get from the new birth, however, is eternal. If we have truly been born again, we have everlasting life with our heavenly father, and it does not begin when we get to heaven; it has already begun!

Using this same analogy regarding physical birth and spiritual birth, let me ask you, "Can we become unborn in our physical life. No! We can die, but we can't become unborn. And - did we have any part in making our physical birth happen? No! Then how can we think that we have some part in our spiritual birth, and how can we believe that we could become spiritually unborn? In fact, if we could lose our salvation (become unborn or die spiritually) then we could never get it back any more than we could get physical life back after we die. This may be what the writer of Hebrews is referring to in Hebrews 6:4-6.

Again, Peter is providing some additional explanation regarding what he said in verse 23. We were born again, not of corruptible seed but by the word of the Lord. He told us in the previous verse that our flesh is temporary and will pass away like flowers in the garden, but the word of the Lord (the source of our spiritual life) lasts forever. Since his word lasts forever and we were born through this word, our new birth will also last forever.

Now, lest his readers try to spiritualize the expression "the word of the Lord," Peter tells us that this word is the very message that is contained in the gospel which was preached to us when we were saved.

Having laid the groundwork in chapter 1, Peter continues now in chapter 2.

1 Peter 2:1-5

Therefore, laying aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

In chapter 1 we were 1) commanded to be holy because our heavenly Father is holy, 2) commanded to recognize that our redemption is precious due to the precious price that was paid for it, and 3) commanded to see that our spiritual birth came not from corruptible things but from the incorruptible, eternal word of God so that the spiritual life we now have is also eternal.

Therefore, because of all of this, we should lay aside certain unholy actions, namely all badness or evil, all deception, hypocrisy, ill will and all evil speaking. This is a lot to lay down! In fact, Peter says that if we are truly saved, we have already laid these things aside.

You will notice that all of these sinful practices have self at the heart of them. And - if you observe carefully, you will also see that there is a progression here: deceit springs out of evil actions, hypocrisy springs out of deceit, ill will springs out of hypocrisy, and speaking evil of others springs out of ill will.

As with most cases in the Bible, when we are commanded to remove or lay aside something we are also told to put on, or start doing, something else. Peter just told us to lay aside a number of unholy actions, each of which is associated with self-will. In exchange for laying aside such things we are to crave the sincere milk of the Word like newborn babies.

One of the characteristics of a little baby is that he or she is always hungry. Likewise young Christians should always be desiring the nourishment of the Word of God. Personally, I question the salvation of any Christian who isn't hungry for the Word.

Now, let me carry this one step further. Unfortunately, today there are many Christians who, though they have been saved for many years, are still drinking from a bottle when it comes to feeding on the Word of God. The writer of Hebrews put it this way:

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

The only way we will continue to grow as Christians is to have consistent time in the Word and to expose ourselves to preaching and teaching that will provide us with spiritual meat.

But first, let's see what Peter is NOT saying here. He is not saying that there is a question about the readers' salvation. He made that very clear in the previous chapter:

[you who are chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ... who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... who are protected by the power of God through faith ... (selections from 1 Peter 1:2-5)

Neither is Peter questioning whether his readers have already experienced the Lord's provision for their needs in the past. In fact, Peter is assuming that his readers indeed have experienced that gracious provision.

Because we have experienced God's watch care over us, we should be willing, yea eager, to lay aside our bad habits and we should have a craving for the sincere milk of the Word of God. We should be so delighted and amazed that the God of all creation cares for each one of us individually, that we should desire to act and be as He wants us to. And, we should have an uncontrollable desire to read His Word so that we can know Him better and become more like Him.

Those of us who have experienced salvation and God's provision, repeatedly come to Him. He is referred to here as "a living stone," which is a reference to Isaiah 28:16 which says:

Therefore thus says Lord Yahweh, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

or possibly to **Psalms 118:22** which says:

The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone.

Not only was Christ rejected and crucified by the Jews, but He continues to be rejected by unbelievers on a daily basis. This same stone who was rejected by men has been chosen by God, according to Peter.

This Christ, our Lord, unto whom we came at salvation and unto whom we come daily for forgiveness and spiritual sustenance, was chosen before time began to be to one who would become a man, live a perfect life, and willingly give that life for us. He is the One who has become the foundation for the church universal, to be built upon by those who would willingly serve Him.

Now, Peter is about to embark on a treatise regarding the temple and the priesthood and he is doing so for a good reason. Up until the time of the writing of this epistle (somewhere around AD 64), the focus of worship and sacrifice unto Jehovah God had been in Jerusalem. Unbeknownst to Peter, however, is the fact that the Roman army under the emperor Titus was about to destroy the temple (in AD 70). In the church age the only temple of God is the body of believers themselves. There is no need for a separate priesthood to offer sacrifices because our high priest, Jesus, has already offered the ultimate sacrifice to the saving of our souls.

Peter now tells us that we, also, are living stones by which a spiritual house is built. He also tells us that we are a holy priesthood, we have been set-apart for God's use, and our purpose is to offer up spiritual sacrifices. These sacrifices are not to atone for sins (as was done by Old Testament priests), and they are not to pay for our salvation, for that has already been done. We, as priests, are not to offer up physical sacrifices, rather sacrifices of a spiritual nature, which are to be acceptable, or approved, or well-pleasing to God. The reason they are well pleasing is because they are offered up from us through our High Priest, Jesus Christ himself.

A sacrifice is defined as the surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something or someone else. Let me say that again, a sacrifice is the surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something or someone else. We, as part of God's holy priesthood, are to offer spiritual sacrifices to God. The first sacrifice we need to offer is ourselves:

Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Romans 12:1)

Peter has just called us spiritual stones as the building blocks of a spiritual house, the church.

1 Peter 2:6-8

For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes upon him will not be put to shame.” This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,” and, “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this stumbling they were also appointed.

Peter has just talked about us being living stones built up as a spiritual house. He now refers to the foundation that this house is built upon. He also takes this occasion to demonstrate that this is none other than the Messiah referred to in the Old Testament. He does so by quoting **Isaiah 28:16**.

In the first century, important buildings were built out of stone. Although it was a laborious process, it produced a building that would last. The cornerstone was the most important part of a foundation

in those times. It was the stone which determined the location, direction, and elevation which the entire building was to occupy. If it was incorrectly placed, it would affect the entire building. If it was not strong and sturdy enough, it could jeopardize the entire structure. Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith and of the church. Everything we do as Christians must be founded on who He is and what He has done.

The term “cornerstone” is also used in [Ephesians 2:20](#). Reading that passage sheds a little more light on the cornerstone of our faith:

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, is growing into a holy sanctuary in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. ([Ephesians 2:19-22](#))

The phrase, “and he who believes upon him shall not be put to shame,” is taken from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). A direct translation of the original Hebrew version actually reads, “and he who believes on him shall not make haste.” The notion is that one who is disgraced or confounded often runs away, which is why the translators of the Septuagint, believing this to be the intended meaning, rendered it as “disgraced.”

In verses 2 and 4 of this chapter, Peter refers to Christ, the cornerstone, as precious, having great value. In this verse, however, he makes a distinction between what this cornerstone is to true believers and what this stone (stumbling stone) is to unbelievers. To those of us who believe, He is truly precious, but to the disobedient ones, those who reject Christ, He is a stumbling stone, as Peter will say in the next verse. Here, Peter is pulling together the contents of three different Old Testament passages:

Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ([Isaiah 8:14](#))

Therefore thus says Lord Yahweh, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed. ([Isaiah 28:16](#))

The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. ([Psalms 118:22](#))

The Jews, you see, took delight in the verses which portrayed their Messiah as a bearer of blessing, while they overlooked those references to His retribution and offense. Peter is making it clear to his readers that Christ is one and the same with the Messiah and, depending on what they believed about Him, is either a Savior or a Judge.

Christ has become a firm cornerstone to believers, but to those who stub themselves on the Word (that is, they don’t believe the simple message contained in the Bible), He is a stumbling stone and a massive rock that traps. The reason they stumble is because they do not believe.

Peter says, “they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this stumbling they were also appointed.”

Now, lest we get the wrong idea from what Peter is saying, these who do not believe are condemned because they are unbelieving. They are not unbelieving because they are condemned. That is, God does not “cause” them to be unbelieving; He simply judges them for their unbelieving.

And ... God does not hide the truth from these disobedient ones, but Satan does:

in whose case the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
(2 Corinthians 4:4)

So What?

Based on what we've just learned, let me ask you a few questions. Is your salvation evident by the way you treat others? Do your unsaved friends now see you as different? Kinder? Do you place the welfare of your brothers and sisters in Christ above your own?

Can you imagine losing your life and trying to be physically born again? You simply can't do it. Once this corruptible physical life is gone, it's gone. But our spiritual life is different. We can't lose our spiritual life because, as Peter tells us, it is not corruptible. It's eternal. Do you see that? You can't lose your salvation ... ever ... period!

Like a flower, we all must die physically some day, but we don't have to die the second death (spiritually). God has given Christians eternal spiritual life through His Word. Let's take a fresh, new look at this new birth which we have and recognize how truly priceless it is!

Anyone who believes the gospel message has been born again through the word of God. He or she has eternal life. When we share the gospel message with others, we are literally sowing the spiritual seed of our heavenly father. We carry the power of eternal life in what we say. Think about that!

Behaving like a child of God is one of the most difficult things to do with consistency. In fact, because we still have our sin nature, it is impossible to do apart from God's Holy Spirit living in us and working through us. The secret is to get self off the throne of our life and let God have His rightful place there!

Think about how often you come to God for comfort or direction, either in prayer or through the reading of His Word. You do so because you have a privileged relationship. Because you have accepted the gift of salvation, you are a child of God; therefore, you can come to the living stone. And because of this you can offer yourself as an additional building block of the church universal when you submit to Him and serve Him.

Now, let me ask three final questions. Is it your constant desire to become more Christ-like? Do you have a craving to learn more about the truths of God's Word? Are you consuming that spiritual meat?

If you did not answer a resounding "Yes!" to all of these questions, perhaps a time of prayerful discussion with your heavenly Father is in order!

Let's pray.