



GROWTH GROUP FALL 2019
STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND: FINDING HOPE IN 1ST PETER
WEEK 3 – SEPTEMBER 29, 2019 - 1 PETER 1:22-2:3

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Peter has talked about the importance of our “new birth” into the living hope of Jesus Christ. He has called his listeners to a life of holiness where they recognize that they have been set apart by God and that they belong to Him. This week Peter talks about being born again and the implications of that reality. However, before he gets to that topic, he discusses the importance of loving one another.

1 John 1:9 reminds us that we love because God first loved us. Peter says that the reason that we can love in such a sincere way is because we have been born again, because of the word of God. Peter uses a farming analogy to make his point. The farmer sows seed that is perishable. It is here today and gone tomorrow. But the seed that God sows is different because it is imperishable. This seed is the living word of God which endures forever.

We have to be careful to not assume that this “word of the Lord” strictly means the Bible. When Peter was writing there was no New Testament. The only “scriptures” that people might have known would have been the Hebrew Scriptures – the Old Testament. Peter seems to be talking about more than that in these sentences. This word of the Lord should remind us of the “logos”, that is mentioned in the first chapter of the gospel of John, where we read that the “word” became “flesh” and dwelt amongst us. This “word” became a person that was known to us as Jesus Christ.

When Peter talks about the word that was preached to them he is talking about the message and person of Jesus Christ. He is referring to the work that God has done through Jesus Christ to bring salvation to all people. When this word was spoken to them, a number of people believed. Their lives were forever changed. They were “born again.”

Peter’s writing suggests that salvation is more than just a decision to follow Jesus. Salvation is something we grow into. We taste and see that the Lord is good and then should desire more. We recognize that we need a savior to remove our sinfulness and brokenness, but we should also seek ways that we can “grow in our salvation.”



EXPLORING THE TEXT

Read 1 Peter 1:22-2:3

22 You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart. 23 For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. 24 As the Scriptures say, "People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades. 25 But the word of the Lord remains forever." And that word is the Good News that was preached to you. 2:1 So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. 2 Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, 3 now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

- 1) What is the difference between "being raised in the church" and "being born again?" Which would you say reflects your own experience?
- 2) What are the characteristics of an "unclean soul?" Vv. 22: How does God's truth cleanse us?
- 3) What are the characteristics of an "insincere love?" How does that differ from "sincere love?" Share a time when you have witnessed or experienced "sincere love."
- 4) Vv. 23-25: What is required to be "born again?" How does God's Word contribute to being born again? Would your family and friends say that you share these characteristics of being "born again?"
- 5) When you think of the "Good News," what comes to mind?
- 6) Vv. 2:1-3: You've heard of the "fruit of the Spirit." What would be the fruits of "evil behavior?" How do you get rid of all evil behavior?
- 7) What best describes "salvation:" is it a place or a journey? What are the differences between a newborn believer and a seasoned believer?

BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) What responsibility, if any, does a seasoned believer have to help a newborn believer?