

What to Love and Long for Most (Part 1)

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[0 : 0 0] that at grace we're concerned that we sing sound doctrine that is biblical truth back to god so that you're not standing there singing songs to god that don't honor him and that don't please him and that don't line up with the truth of what he's revealed to us about himself so this is an example of you singing my sermon all right that's what this is i once was lost and darkest night now when you're lost you're lost all right you can't be lost if you have a good idea of where you are right yet thought i knew the way that's a great reflection of how we used to live our lives thinking that we had it together and we knew what we were doing what we were about when in reality from god's perspective we were lost we were not found the sin was the problem it promised joy in life but it had led me to the grave now this next verse look at this one i had no hope that you would own a rebel to your will and if you'd not loved me first that's my sermon if you'd not love me first i would refuse you still that is sobering truth thank you brother we can put up the title of my message is what to love and long for most what to love and long for most again we're in first peter working our way verse by verse through this book of the bible written by the apostle peter who was with jesus throughout his public ministry was with jesus at his crucifixion and resurrection and has served jesus faithfully before he himself was martyred history tells us that he lost his head as did the apostle paul under the emperor nero's reign we pick up the text in first peter chapter one beginning in verse 22 since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brothers the brethren fervently love one another from the heart for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable 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 the flower falls off but the word of the lord endures forever and this is the word which was preached to you therefore putting 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 now this morning we'll only deal with a portion of this but in this passage peter gives us two primary commands to carry his emphasis and in each case the command is tied directly to your relationship to the bible each command tied directly to your relationship to the bible now question did you know that you have a relationship to god's word the bible and do you think about that

most of you in here do you reflect on that through the week through the memory verses perhaps through bible studies that you attend through your daily devotional time in the word yourself right in all of those different ways through the week you're reminded that you have a critical and important relationship relationship with god's word everybody everybody does everybody unbelievers who take no mind of god's word unbelievers who relate to god's word with disdain or apathy maybe even hatred they do not realize that the bible stands in judgment of them and so there is this two-way relationship they disdain or they have an apathy toward or they even hate god's word as an unbeliever but it comes right back and god's word stands in judgment of them i want to show you a couple of passages to wet your appetites and get your minds thinking with me along these lines if you'll turn in your bibles to hebrews right there before peter the book of james and then before that hebrews chapter 12 and verse 25 the author of hebrews speaks directly to the reality of standing in judgment against us the word of god doing that see to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking capital h for if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth that would be the prophets and the apostles much less will we escape who turn away from him who warns from heaven there is a warning that has come to us through the scriptures it is the word of god from heaven and we are being told don't ignore this word you do it to your own peril then in the book of john if you turn with me there to chapter 12 john 12 beginning in verse 44 where jesus is speaking and jesus cried out and said he who believes in me does not believe in me but in him who sent me he who sees me sees the one who sent me and of course he's speaking here about god the father i have come as light into the world so that everyone who believes in me will not remain in darkness if anyone hears my sayings my words and does not keep them i do not judge him for i did not come to judge the world but to save the world he who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has one who judges him and what is that one the word i spoke is what will judge him at the last day for i did not speak on my own initiative but the father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak and i know that this commandment is eternal life therefore the things i speak i speak just as the father has told me folks what's at stake in the words of the bible the words of the lord not just the words of jesus but the entire bible is the word of jesus

the word of god is the creator of the word and the living word himself what's at stake is eternal life life or continuing death to ignore god's word is to live listen a death sentence here and for eternity jesus said i came to save the world and i offer myself as that salvation if you are to be judged at the last day what will judge you will be my words that you did not heed about who i am and why i came that will judge you and that judgment will get you an eternity in a devil's hell this is what we don't want to happen to the people we care about would you even wish that on your worst enemy as it were i couldn't i'm sure you couldn't this is an especially critical thing to resolve your relationship to scripture because you cannot be a christian you cannot be a god follower apart from god's word no one gets saved from sin no one is granted eternal life apart from god's word you cannot be saved apart from the truth of god's word someone has to tell you this truth the truth that we believe is the truth about god's son coming to rescue us from sin and death where do we find that truth exclusively in scripture you cannot be saved apart from the truth now let's read one other place before we move through and come to our first major point here that we'll deal with this morning romans chapter 10 we're going to visit this chapter a couple of times in my message this morning romans chapter 10 we're just going to start in verse 8 and roll into this 8 through 17 will be our reference but what does it say the word is near you in your mouth and in your heart that is the word of faith which we are preaching that if you confess with your mouth

Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved for and this is the proper order that this takes place in for with the heart a person believes resulting in righteousness and then with the mouth from the heart that has now been made righteous the mouth speaks or confesses resulting in salvation for the scripture says whoever believes in him will not be disappointed for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek in this matter for the same Lord is Lord of all abounding in riches for all who call on him so all people are saved in the same way by believing in their heart and confessing with their mouth for whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved praise the Lord how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed how will they believe in him whom they have not heard and how will they hear without a preacher or a proclaimer a herald to tell them these things how will they preach unless they are sent just as it is written how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things however they did not all heed the good news for Isaiah says

Lord who has believed our report so faith believing comes from hearing and hearing by what church the word of Christ amen so do you think about the Bible's role in your life what place does God's word occupy in how you think live and relate to other people how much of God's word defines and bears on the way you think about going about your life especially as you relate to other people more especially as you relate to unpleasant people in your life does God's word help you there if we were to read God's word in the way that we are working through the Bible and our reading plan we would see many many many examples of unpleasant people coming into contact with

[13 : 23] God's people and what resulted Jesus being our supreme example of humility and kindness and gentleness and meekness and patience and forgiveness do you read God's word and do you receive God's word humbly as the word of the Lord to you to you is it personal and then do you seek to apply it to your life in a very practical everyday manner now folks these are vital vital questions to answer vital to Christian living and to bringing honor and glory to God in your daily life now in our passage this morning Peter tells us that loving God loving one another and maturing in your faith each of those only happen by a relationship with scripture you cannot love

God love others and grow in your Christian faith apart from the Bible you cannot do it and we're not designed to do it apart from scripture so to this point in chapter one up to this moment in chapter one as we've gone through Peter if you'll be there with me Peter has been talking about God's work of saving you from your sins and your response of living a holy life back to God God so if you'll look up on the screen Peter now takes these two realities God's will at work in you and God's will as it works out of you and applies them to the two of the deepest and most enduring desires of your redeemed heart when I say a redeemed heart I'm talking about the way that God has given you a new heart no longer a heart of stone but a heart of flesh that is a living heart for him and so the two things that most endear you in the

Lord fervently love your church family and faithfully long for God's truth we'll be dealing with that first point today that's what we'll be dealing with fervently love your church family verses 22 through 25 now as we look at this first point together from first Peter chapter one verse 22 Peter gives us two preconditions for our ability to do this faithfully there are two preconditions that are involved in us being able to fervently love one another from our hearts the first is this since you have purified your souls by God's gospel now there's a lot to unpack here which is why we're only going to deal with this first point this morning and this is the first of two preconditions

I still need to deal with another one after this one but I want you to zero in if you would since you have we need to deal with this you have purified your souls by the gospel I want you to just please think about that with me and think about what that communicates to you you have purified your souls just let that sink in for a second in verse 22 we read again since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren now comes the command we have all of that before the command fervently love one another from the heart the command comes at the end of verse 22 fervently love one another from the heart but with the precondition stated as a past tense but ongoing reality did you see that a past tense since you already have in obedience to the truth purified your souls take my word for it as

I work through this that is a reference grammatically to an ongoing reality it wasn't a one time thing and then it stopped it happened in the past and continues and I'll explain more of that as we go since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren that's what we're dealing with we cannot love each other from the sincerity of our hearts apart from first having our hearts purified by obedience to the truth this is why we say that as unbelievers we really don't know understand or have the capacity to love not with the love of God and as far as I'm concerned reading the scripture that's the only kind of love there is the love that God gives in agape the love that

[18 : 59] God gives in eros the love that God gives as we have love for one another right that kind of love as we understand it is authored created by and given as a gift by the Lord so we understand that when unbelievers say I love you they really don't know what they're talking about boy I certainly didn't I remember as a teenager looking into this girl's eyes before I met my wife and saying I love you I was lying sometimes I knew I was lying but most of the time I probably thought I did there was one girl I saw her much later in my life and when I did I went to her and because I told the Lord this I'm just being candid with you if I ever see this girl again

I'm going to ask her to forgive me and so I saw her again and I asked her to forgive me and I told her I did not love you and she got mad and she said yes you did I was coming at it from a Christian point of view I wasn't saved when I knew her I wasn't in the Lord but I didn't know what love was I thought I did and I threw that term around a lot but I didn't know I did not know but when I came to know Christ friends I came to had then they were so different that's what we're talking about here when Peter tells us since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls all that stuff before he says fervently love one another makes fervently loving one another possible you don't have all that pre stuff you can't fervently love you cannot fulfill this command a purified soul is a precondition for a sincere unhypocritical fervent love for one another from the heart which is what this verse is telling us now the question in all of that for me is this well then how do

I get a purified soul great question you simply hear me now now listen closely you're really good at this so listen closely here's how you get a purified soul you simply obey God's truth and cleanse yourself from sins now I know Greg's hair is going up on the back of his neck he's thinking you are going to clean that up aren't you I am I don't want my fellow pastor's heart to get to racing too hard here I get the big hook right listen to it again how do I get a purified soul well you simply obey God's truth you cleanse yourself from your sins isn't that what he said isn't that what the verse says keep the rules obey the Bible purify your soul and then love everybody simple is this what

Peter is saying if we understand Peter this way it's like we're saying this if I can obey enough then I can love enough and then God will love me and be good with me and all of you are shaking your heads no for the record of the tape that's exactly right this is heresy so far this is not good theology so we need to hasten to the good stuff right all right look up here on the screen if you would this is not an if then scenario this is a since then scenario and they are very very different since you have so this isn't about if only I can then as if it all depends on you this is about since I already have then now two things you might say well this is still emphasizing apparently something

I've done fair enough so we're kind of right back where we were have I purified my own soul is that what we're talking about you might even ask this what did I already do when did I do it what was it that I did the issue on the table is that we must have purified souls to love each other sincerely and fervently as God commands that's clear I think that's clear the question on the table is how do we get purified souls that we then might be in the position to love one another with this fervency this sincerity from the heart see God isn't saying that you do something hallmarkish something sentimental something shallow something insipid something you define as love he's saying fervently sincerely unhypocritically love one another from the heart that is from the deepest core of your personhood that is with everything you are and all that you have love one another now where do you get that kind of love do you really believe that apart from

[25 : 04] God you can love each other like that now I know from my life I proved I can't so I don't have any question in my mind or heart about where the love like this comes from it doesn't come from me this is what Peter is telling us where do we get this purified soul Peter's language seems to suggest that we purify our own souls as we obey God's word can you see where I'm getting that I need to know if you see that does it sound like that to you too so a casual reading of this might suggest to your mind that in some way as I obey the truth of God no that's not what he said he's not saying that as I obey he said I obeyed so I obeyed and that purified my soul and so what we're good and now I love and that's

I don't know how I resolve this for us now is everybody clear on the question on the table did I purify my own soul by obeying the truth of God at some point in the past or is Peter emphasizing something else and if he is emphasizing something else then what is my role what we're dealing with here is where do you fit into your own salvation and answering that question and understanding that question puts you in the position of being able to then understand what this fervently love one another thing is all about and where the power to do that comes from again

I told you at the beginning what's at stake here is genuine love now we've been singing about genuine love we read in the scriptures and our call to worship about genuine love we have an understanding about how critically important genuine love is because we are in the Lord because he first loved us who first loved whom he first loved us that we might then in response love him so we need to use these three avenues to help us resolve this first we can immediately turn to other places in scripture where the issue of our souls being cleansed from sin our salvation is addressed so we might call this more of the further context of scripture not the near context the verses right around what we're studying perhaps verses within the same chapter but a little further out in the

Bible there are other places in the Bible that address our question that's on the table here did I purify my own soul by obeying the truth or is there something else going on here okay did I get it up there oh I need to move it there we go other related scripture thank you prompter she keeps me honest in all of this so let's look at a couple of passages Ephesians 2 4 through 10 if you're not there already this ought to be pretty familiar territory for some of the ladies in in Mary Bible study Ephesians 2 4 through 10 but God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our transgressions made us alive together with

Christ by grace you have been saved grace is the undeserved favor of God you have been saved together with Christ made alive together with Christ by the undeserved favor of God on your life and raised up with him and seated with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus again for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves what it is the gift of God what is the gift of God what's the antecedent to the gift of God faith belief right not as a result of works so that no one may boast you can't have

[30 : 29] God's glory God gets it if we're going to talk about you getting saved from your sins we're going to talk about God's glory in doing that for you your need and God's mercy and undeserved favor being showered on you in Christ Jesus that you could be brought from death to life one more verse in verse 10 for then now if there's any doubt let this one seal it for you for whose workmanship are we who worked all of this in us to produce this product of this saved person whose work God's work we are isn't that beautiful we are his workmanship we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus can you get any better than that you are created in Christ Jesus friends for good works now what came first his workmanship or yours his you are his workmanship even your believing was a gift from him he showered all of that on you through grace and mercy and now as a response of what he's worked in you what's being worked out good works oh but wait before you get all proud about that look what it says next which

God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them now some people freak out about that and can't handle it we read this and rejoice and leap for joy and say thank you thank you God for your marvelous miraculous wonderful grace and mercy on our lives that you took spiritually dead rebelling sinners and turned them into God worshipers who could do good works good works means God pleasing I can now live a life that is God pleasing and he did all that he gets all the glory and the credit for every bit of that well why wouldn't we want it that way if our hearts are truly enamored with him in the love and forgiveness he's given us why wouldn't we want God to get all the glory there's one other passage Romans 10 9 and 10

I told you we come to Romans a couple times Romans 10 9 and 10 now there's a reason I want you to see this you'll remember we read this just a few moments ago in the larger context if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved now that is tied verse verse 9 is tied to verse 8 verse 9 is like a restatement of the reality of verse 8 but what does it say the word is near you it is in your mouth and in your heart and so in that order telling us it's in our mouth and in our heart he says in verse 9 therefore you confess with your mouth what is in your heart Jesus is Lord and you believe you exercise faith in your heart that God did resurrect

Jesus from the dead you will be saved as a result then in verse 10 he gives us the order that this takes place in in time and in reality for us as human beings and what is that for with the heart first a person believes and then notice resulting in righteousness the declaration the justification of your righteousness in the Lord Jesus and with the mouth then you respond in confession and in those things coming together it results in what your salvation now we're going to clean that up some more also because I don't want you to fall into a heretical trap in thinking about these two sides of this coin are you with me so far all right let me ask you a question to see test here we go who does the believing God or you we do is it your belief you are believing otherwise you're a right now we know that's not what scripture teaches you believe you believe from the heart and out of the overflow of that heart of belief your mouth confesses this is you all of you is being brought to bear in that process of confessing

Jesus as your Lord and Savior you are believing and you are confessing praise the Lord wouldn't have it any other way this is exactly the worship God wants and demands from us as long as we understand that all of that is in response to the initiative of God to bring you from a state of deadness to liveness faith and and if that first part doesn't happen that second part of believing and confessing will never happen but I want it to be clear that we are the ones doing the believing according to Ephesians chapter two where do we get the belief where do we get the faith it is the gift of right so you're being given everything you need to make that confession from that believing heart but something has to happen to that heart that's dead before you can believe and confess we'll do more with that in just a sec tracking with me

[36 : 38] I'm looking in the eyeballs here I told Suzanne pray for me this is a challenging reality that I want to try to be clear on so so far we're using now think about this with me we are using other places in scripture other avenues to help us deal with this idea did we cleanse our own souls from sin by our spiritual work of obeying God's truth or is Peter emphasizing something else one way to resolve that is to look to other places in scripture where we have a very clear clear teaching that helps answer that question now need so we'll do a little bit more with that so here here is the second the second way the second avenue we'll look at to answer this question about our own souls being purified because of a work that we do let's look at what is king in biblical interpretation and what is that context what has

Peter already made clear for us in the near context of first Peter chapter one so we've taken the far view and now we're shrinking it down and getting laser focused right into the chapter in the context that this is all flowing from we've dealt with this earlier in the chapter he said all these things and now we come to the place we are this morning we want to retreat a little bit and see some of the flow that he's made in his argument in his teaching so we go back up into verses 1 through 3 Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who reside as aliens strangers sojourners pilgrims scattered throughout Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia and Bithynia and my scripture says who are chosen or more literally the elect ones according to now here's the part that it gets fleshed out according to you are a chosen one an elect one according to the foreknowledge of

God the father by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood there's the trinity we went through all of this may grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure as a result of all of that verse 3 blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through what the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead now you notice that you see that and we understand our souls are purified by God's work of grace through his gift of faith we are cleansed from sin by the gift and working of God we are cleansed from sin by the gift and working of

God and then third grammar now don't let this one intimidate you all right you do not have to know Greek or be a Greek scholar to polish up a little bit on grammar and there are software tools out there that you can use if you have a computer that does a lot of this spade work for you if I'm not mistaken this is the kind of thing Melanie you guys might do a little bit of in your study I know Marivi does it in her she'll bring these points out as she studies but grammar is a third way that we can help answer the question and resolve the issue of our own souls doing the purifying or is it something else and here's what we can determine you might have to take my word a little bit for this purified is a Greek participle and it is in the perfect tense now one of the things that helps us with is this look at the definition of the perfect tense in the Greek it is an action completed in the past producing a state of being or result which exists in the present so it's a past action a completed past action with ongoing present consequences do you see how rich this language is we can be pretty precise when we dig down into the syntax and the grammar of the

Greek language that's that's what we're dealing with when we talk about the grammar aspect of this what does all of the past action produced the ongoing present condition of their purified souls obedience to the truth obedience to the truth brought about this completed past action purified souls that has an ongoing present reality right now for them it's a continuing action so it wasn't just something that happened in the past it's something that happened in the past and carries forward for them into the present now we need to understand that in the context of this passage

[42 : 56] Peter is using obedience to the truth as a synonym for faith or for our coming to trust Jesus Christ for forgiveness for our sins in other words in a word listen he is using obedience obedience to the truth in verse 22 as a synonym for your conversion your conversion to Christ their conversion to Christ since you have been converted you have now experienced and are experienced this purifying of your souls and in all of that it is for the purpose for you loving your brothers and sisters in Christ fervently then love one another from the heart now what does that tell us about

Peter's point again let me let me clean it up a little more and let you see it up here and it might help that God purified our souls by the gospel at our conversion completed past action and that he keeps us purified in his love by the gospel that is ongoing present consequences so that we can love each other sincerely and fervently from the heart it is critically important that we understand and get right this order as the Bible teaches us now I told you there were two preconditions to loving each other fervently from the heart so I'm going to hasten to the other one and try to bring them together for us all right here's the second one for you have been born again by God's gospel now you may say well wait a minute isn't that the same thing as what we're doing with the purified soul which is conversion well let's let's see let's see what happens with all of this you have been born again notice one of them says since you have this one says for you have been there are always beloved there are always two sides to the reality of our salvation or of someone being born again one side concerns your problem you are spiritually dead to God according to what we've read even so far in the scriptures you were dead in your trespasses and sins so that's how God sees you right before faith before salvation before you trust Christ before God forgives you before God gives you life

God's perspective is that he sees you as dead spiritually dead to him you've heard people say this you're dead to me and you know what that means that's how God sees us as unbelievers okay now on the other side of this salvation coin it concerns God's solution you have a problem you're spiritually dead the other side is God's solution he alone provides spiritual life I say it again he alone provides spiritual life the issue friend standing between your problem and God's solution between you and God this is very personal is your sin your sin stands between you and your maker your creator and because you have unforgiven sin in your life because you've never come to the place where God has made provision for that sin to be forgiven

God sees you as spiritually dead and in reality you are you are spiritually dead to God and you in that state are your own greatest problem because you are indeed spiritually dead to God now if you would let me illustrate how desperate your sin situation really is that's how desperate just in a picture now I want you to imagine with me that for illustration in all of this I said Jeremy if you jump up and go out there in the hallway I've got something I want you to roll in and just sit right here there it is and he rolls this big old coffin in and we just sit it right here there it is and now I'm going to say to you now I'm going to I'm going to do something here so I walk over and I look at the coffin and I start my rant I say alright you now there's a corpse in there it's not an empty coffin there's a corpse in there

I cooperated with the morgue and got him to help us out with this and it's been verified and I show you the certificate of death and all that kind of stuff to prove to you and I say alright you get up get up get up get up get up get up get up and I make a big show I walk around and I and I'm sincere and I'm saying now look and I say to you I'm a little embarrassed I don't know why this chap is not cooperating with me get up and I avoid and then I get indignant about it and then I get tempered about it and then I say well maybe I'm going about it the wrong way so then I come over and I reach in and I do this and I say please get up please come and talk to me will you just come on and I just get surpy about it well Rob looks at all of this for going on five minutes and he says I've had enough of this and so he gets up in the kindness of his heart and puts his arm around me and gives me a holy headlock in the corner and he says Jeff what's wrong with you and I said what do you mean and he said you spent five minutes up here making a fool out of yourself what are you talking about he said what do you hope to accomplish

[49 : 02] I'm trying to get this guy to cooperate with me and get up and talk to me and let me tell him about some stuff Jeff this guy is stone cold dead he can't cooperate with you he's dead well I know that well if you know that why are you treating him like he's supposed to listen to you and respond to you and do what you say well I mean well I mean I thought I could just you know well that's foolish don't do that go back to preaching the word nobody could see Rob doing that that's why I picked on you because he loves me enough to do something like that and he loves you enough all right so the whole thing sounds ridiculous doesn't it and the whole the whole idea and the issue here is I am trying to elicit cooperation from a rock might as well be a dead thing a stone a nothing a corpse that corpse cannot provide one single bit of effort cooperation or help to me at all no matter how well intended I am we got the point right that's the reality and the truth of you being spiritually dead in your trespasses and sins how much cooperation can you offer to

God in that state none you are dead you're a spiritual corpse here's the analogy that I heard after I became a Christian it was from a visiting person that came to our church I was probably 20 years old I was saved in college and the evangelist meant well and the illustration was the the you're thrown out off the boat you're sinking in the water you're going to drown you've gone down several times you can't fight the waves this last time is it if you don't get help you're dead you're going to drown you'll be fish food on the bottom of the ocean so as you go down for that final time all that's sticking up above the water is just a finger and God in his wonderful love and accuracy throws you a life preserver and it just lands right where it needs to be and you hook your finger around it and God pulls you up out and I thought wow that's powerful yeah that's powerful it's also heresy that's not what the Bible teaches let me ask you a question again how does a dead corpse reach up and put their finger around something they're dead they can't this is what scripture teaches plainly and clearly we don't have to debate it we don't have to argue about it you are dead in your trespasses and sins such were some of you but God in his mercy made you alive now how much clearer can it be who gets all the glory amen who needed all the help me amen wait a minute you read us

Romans you said we believe that's doing something well just hang on don't be impatient I want to show you a few other things being dead means that you are helpless to help yourself until you have life you cannot respond only God gives life so I could have been standing there in that conversation with Rob and I could have said Rob could have said to me Jeff short of the miracle of God giving life to that corpse he's never going to do what you say and that probably would have been my light bulb moment apart from the miracle of God this chap will never ever get out of that coffin do you hear that apart from the miracle of God that's right that's right look at look at what the scripture says God has given us eternal life and this life is in his son he who has the son has the life he who does not have the son does not have the life Jesus even said of himself I am the way and the truth and the life no one comes to the father but through me friends the way to bring your problem and God's solution together is found only in the Lord

Jesus Christ that is in relationship to him by faith Paul also spoke to our sin problem and God's solution in Jesus if you just go back with me hold your finger there in first Peter and go back with me to Ephesians chapter 2 so that you can see this for yourselves and you were dead now he's speaking something in the past tense here because these are Christians he's wanting to remind them this was your condition before the Lord before Christ you were dead spiritually dead in your trespasses and sins now if you'll go to verse 4 but God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us eat what even in that deadness yes friend even when we were dead in our transgressions what God made us alive together with

Christ by grace you have been saved now we want to ask the question what does any of that from Ephesians 2 have to do with what Peter is saying well look at it because of his great love with which he loved you you have been born again we'll take Ephesians and put it with first Peter because they're saying the same thing and you'd expect that throughout scripture wouldn't you that's exactly right that's exactly what we see in this passage now look at this one from Ephesians and first Peter in love from Ephesians he predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself according to the kind intention of his will in love you have been born again according to the kind intention of his will you have been born again you see how they come together this is familiar for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life but God demonstrates his own love toward us when in that while we were yet sinners while we were in that dead state to him

[56 : 45] Christ died for us for if while we were enemies we were made reconciled to God through the death of his son much more now having been reconciled we shall be saved by his life those are powerful powerful words we shall be saved by his life so this phrase then in first Peter chapter 1 verse 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable that is through the living and enduring word of God this phrase for you have been emphasizes God's side of salvation reality and the phrase from verse 22 since you have emphasizes the sinner's side of salvation reality for you have been born again is God's act of love for you and since you have been obedience to the truth is your response to God's love for you you with me God's doing the work and making it possible for what he works in you to be expressed out of you in belief and in confession it's the beautiful beautiful work of the Lord now

I told you I cleaned something up a minute ago I don't want you to think oh well there it is we're cooperating and there's a fancy long word that theologians use to describe the differences here synergism and monergism we're monergism synergism bad monergism good synergism has the idea of God throwing the life thing to you and you hooking your finger around it that's you and God cooperating in your salvation God comes and he does his bit and then I do my bit and we put those two bits together and I get saved instead the scripture teaches God does all the work and gives you everything you need to respond to what he's doing in you the first thing he has to do is bring you to life because you're dead you're not saying anything or believing anything or doing anything until God gives you life and now in giving you that life God puts you in the position to then confess believe confess so it's not a cooperative effort it's a God effort bringing you to life that's monergistic two fancy words theologians you may see these as you read and you have been born again God's act of love for you since you have in obedience to the truth your response as a spiritually dead corpse you needed God to actively love you from death to life for you to respond to his love and then live in love the order is critical so here's how we can paraphrase Peter's point since since you have in response to

God's love in the gospel completely purified your souls for a genuine love of your Christian brothers and sisters then earnestly intensely resolutely love one another from the heart of love which God has gifted to you I hope you see how God gets all the glory in that and what do we get oh just this little thing called eternal life win-win right so God can command you right here verse 22 fervently love one another from the heart God can command you to love because he created you to love in Christ and what did God use to change us from spiritual death to life this is all next time what did God use to change us from spiritual death to spiritual life what does it say in verse 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable oh Peter what what what is the imperishable seed that has caused us to be born again through the living and enduring word of God his imperishable enduring living active word in other words God's gospel his great news about his son being our salvation that gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe and God willing willing next time we'll talk about Peter's beautiful truth of how God's word in you makes God's work in you imperishable and enduring for an eternity I'll say that again and then I'll pray we're going to talk about how the truth of God's word in you makes God's work in you imperishable in you imperishable the work of God working his truth in your heart in your life makes that work that he's doing in you and has done in you imperishable that's the work of eternity so now you see again why I say no relationship to God's word no salvation if that relationship remains a relationship of enmity rebellion disdain disdain apathy you have no hope you come to Christ and God works that word in you to bring you life it's an enduring imperishable word it gives you eternal life and Peter calls that a living hope not an empty one a living one and that's how he started the chapter and so he just keeps building on that doesn't he he makes it easier for us preachers because he loves to do it in triads we all love three points in a poem then we close it out let's pray together well almighty God and father we are taken in our hearts and spirits and left at least in my case breathless in my heart as I contemplate and have this entire week the wonders that we have just spoken of from first Peter it's the wonder of you loving rebellious sinners to yourself even while we were helpless even while we were dead in our trespasses and sins even while we were at our worst in love in love you brought us to Christ you quickened us and gave us life you regenerated us you regenerated us you rebeget us and we have as a result of all of that and you working your word in our hearts eternal life

and so you tell us fervently love one another from the heart God I pray that you would help us to draw on your love for us as we love one another I pray that you would help us to see that you loved us to the absolute fullest measure from the heart that you're not commanding us to do anything that you haven't not that you haven't given us an example of already you loved us so fully from the heart father that you gave your only son you let him be tortured to death on a cross you raised him from the dead and you have given us living hope so I pray that it would be burned into our conscience and into our mind that you took us from being spiritual corpses to making us alive in Christ and giving us your heaven help us then in joy and with gratitude to love one another fervently from the heart we pray all of this for your glory in Jesus name Amen