
Church in Campbell Weekly News

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THE PURIFICATION OF OUR SOULS

In this message we shall consider 1:22-25. Verse 22 says, "Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from the heart fervently." According to his habit in writing, Peter in this verse puts a number of things together. First he says, "Having purified your souls." We cannot find such an expression any place else in the New Testament. We may read about purifying our heart, but not about purifying our soul.

The purification of our souls is the Spirit's sanctification of our disposition that we may live a holy life in God's holy nature (vv. 15-16). It is deeper than the purification of our sins (Heb. 1:3) and the cleansing of sin (1 John 1:7). The latter is the purification of our outward doing; the former, the purification of our inward being--the soul. This is like the washing in the word in Ephesians 5:26.

In verse 22 Peter uses the perfect tense when he speaks of having purified our souls. But when did this happen? In verses 1 through 21 there is no mention of such a thing. But suddenly, in verse 22, Peter says, "Having purified your souls." But in the foregoing twenty-one verses he has not said anything concerning this purification.

Our soul is composed of mind, emotion, and will, which are also parts of our heart. To have our soul purified is to have our mind, emotion, and will, the parts of our heart, purified from any kind of defilement and contamination. (Acts 15:9; James 4:8). This actually means to have our mind, emotion, and will delivered from all things other than God, and fixed on God as the sole object and unique goal. This kind of purification is accomplished by our obedience to the truth, which is the content and reality of our faith. When we obey the truth, the content and reality of our faith in Christ, our entire soul is concentrated on God and in this way is purified from all things other than God. This is to save our souls from all filthiness by receiving the implanted word (James 1:21), which is the sanctifying truth (John 17:17).

According to Peter's word in verse 22, we purify our souls by obedience to the truth. Here we have the three matters of the purification of the soul, obedience, and truth. We should not take any of these things for granted. Instead, we should ask what truth is here and also what it means to have obedience to the truth. Furthermore, Peter says that this purification of our souls by obedience to the truth is unto unfeigned brotherly love. Here Peter speaks not merely of love, and not only of brotherly love, but of unfeigned brotherly love. Therefore, in this one verse Peter covers the purification of our souls, obedience to the truth, and unfeigned brotherly love. Then he goes on to urge us to love one another from the heart fervently. It is characteristic of Peter's writings to put so many points together in one verse.

According to the proper understanding of language, the subject of "having purified your souls" is "you." This means that Peter is telling the believers that they have purified their souls. Therefore, it is possible to translate the first part of verse 22 this way: "You, having purified your souls."

The way we purify our souls is by our obedience to the truth. This may not be a profound matter like the foreknowledge of God,

but it is very practical. Compared to the great matters on the divine side, it is quite small. Nevertheless, it is very important in our Christian life. We need to ask ourselves if in our Christian life we have experienced the purifying of our souls by obedience to the truth.

TOUCHING REALITY IN THE WORD

In order to understand what it means to purify our souls by obedience to the truth, we must be clear concerning the meaning of truth in this verse. Truth here is the sanctifying truth, which is God's word of reality (John 17:17). Truth in this verse does not mean doctrine. Truth is the reality contained in God's word and conveyed by it. For example, John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world." This is the divine word. This word, however, should not merely be a doctrine to us, as it is with so many readers of John 3:16. To read this verse only in a doctrinal way is to have a natural understanding. This natural understanding is devilish, for the Devil is behind our natural understanding. If our natural understanding occupies us in full, it becomes devilish. If we are to have more than a natural understanding of John 3:16, we need to touch the reality contained in this short word and conveyed by it. When we read, "God so loved the world," we need to ask ourselves if we have experienced this love. We should say, "God so loved the world. Does this 'world' include me? Does this word mean that God so loved me?" Anyone who reads John 3:16 in this way will get saved. Such a one would say, "O God, how I thank You that the world includes me. For You to love the world means that You love me." This is to take John 3:16 as truth, as reality, and not merely as a doctrine.

First Timothy 3:15 says that the church is the house of the living God. This verse contains doctrine, but to us it should not be merely a doctrine. Rather, Paul's word about the church being the house of the living God should be a truth, a reality. We need to ask, "Is the church in my locality the house of the living God?" If we read the verse in this way, we shall contact reality, truth. The truth is the solid content, the reality, contained in the word of God and conveyed by it to us.

First Peter is addressed to scattered Jewish believers who had been in Judaism before they were saved. They had much knowledge of the types in the Old Testament. When they heard the gospel and the teaching of the apostles, they contacted reality. Through the preaching of the gospel and the apostles' teaching, the truth, the reality, in the word of God was conveyed to those Jews. As a result, they heard the reality contained in the word of God. This is the truth.

We should not only receive doctrine from God's word-- we should touch reality. The gospel and the teaching of the apostles contain realities, and these realities had been conveyed to the Jewish believers. The Jewish believers to whom Peter was writing in his first Epistle had received the truth, the reality, from the gospel and from the teaching of the apostles.

GIRDING UP OUR MIND AND PURIFYING OUR SOUL

However, after the believers had received this truth, this reality, the Judaizers came to them and reminded them of their background in the Jewish religion. The talk of the Judaizers was distracting and disturbing and caused the mind of the Jewish believers to wander away from the truth. Perhaps one of the Jewish believers said to his

wife, "Peter's preaching is real, isn't it? Why, then, does it contradict so many things we have heard from our parents? It even seems that some of Peter's teachings are contrary to those of Moses. We really have a problem. Can you believe that our fathers taught us something wrong? Why does Peter teach us things that are different from what we heard in the past?" This illustrates what was the background when Peter wrote this Epistle.

In verse 13 Peter says, "Wherefore, girding up the loins of your mind, being sober, set your hope completely on the grace being brought to you at the unveiling of Jesus Christ." The word "wherefore" at the beginning of this verse is based upon all the divine truths contained in verses 1 through 12. The matter of our being chosen according to the foreknowledge of God is not merely a doctrine; it is a truth, a reality. It is also a reality that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has regenerated us unto a living hope. Furthermore, it is a truth that this living hope is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, kept for us in the heavens. In these twelve verses we have a great deal of truth, of reality.

With all this truth as the basis, Peter charges us to gird up the loins of our mind and to be sober. We should not allow our mind to wander, and we should not be drunken or drugged. To be sober is to be de-drugged, to wake up from a stupor. Therefore, in verse 13 Peter is telling the Jewish believers to forget their religious background, to be sober, and to no longer wander in their mind.

As the Judaizers tried to influence the Jewish believers, so today certain ones may try to influence those in the Lord's recovery. For instance, a young brother may love the Lord's recovery and praise the Lord that he is in the recovery. But then a relative who is a pastor with a theological degree may visit this brother and say, "What do you mean 'recovery'? I have a master's degree from a seminary, but I have never heard about a recovery. Who told you that the Lord has a recovery?" The young brother may not know what to say. Later, he may be unhappy and begin to have doubts in his mind concerning the recovery. He may say to himself, "I certainly have been helped by the ministry in the Lord's recovery. But what about this pastor with a master's degree in theology? Can he be completely wrong about the recovery?" What this brother needs is the girding up of the loins of his mind.

To gird up our mind is actually to purify our soul. Whenever our mind is wandering, our soul is impure. Dissenting thoughts cause our mind to wander. These dissenting thoughts may enter our mind like fiery darts. When our mind begins to wander, our soul becomes unclean. If this is our situation, we need to purify our soul. But how can we purify our soul? We purify our soul by girding up our mind and by setting it on one thing, not allowing it to wander.

The fiery darts of dissenting thoughts not only disturb our mind, but they pollute our emotion and our will. As a result, we are not pure in the Lord and before the Lord. This will make it difficult for us to praise the Lord in a genuine way.

Let us consider again the example of the young brother influenced by a relative who is a pastor. The talk of that pastor brings impurities into this brother's emotion. Not only do the dissenting thoughts cause his mind to wander from the goal of the Lord's recovery; they also cause his emotion to be impure, that is, to have more than one love. This impure emotion can be compared to that of a woman who loves more than one man. She loves her husband, but she also loves someone else. This is fornication. Our emotion should be set only on the Lord. The brother who listened to the dissenting thoughts and words had his emotion polluted. As a result, he has more than one goal, one aim. On the one hand, he is in the Lord's

recovery; on the other hand, he has doubts regarding the recovery. This is a kind of pollution.

This pollution can also damage our will. It becomes difficult for us to make decisions, for we have two goals. Therefore, our entire soul becomes impure. Our mind is wandering, our emotion is divided, and our will is damaged. In such a case, we need the purification of our soul.

God will not purify our soul for us. We need to do this ourselves by our obedience to the truth we have heard and received. Suppose a certain brother struggles for a period of time concerning the Lord's recovery. Eventually, by God's mercy and the moving of the sanctifying Spirit within him, he declares, "Praise the Lord! My mind is girded up with one goal. My emotion is fully set on one Person, the Lord Himself. I have no other object of my love. Therefore, my will follows to make a strong decision: I am for the Lord, and I am for the Lord's recovery. I don't care for anything else." This is obedience to the truth. Such an obedience to the truth becomes the means by which we purify our souls. Therefore, in verse 22 Peter tells the Jewish believers that they have purified their souls by obedience to the truth. This truth is conveyed in God's sanctifying word.

(Excerpt from Life Studies of 1 Peter, Message 14)

Burdens for Church Prayer

- May our church life and personal life be in the realm of love and light, making our spirit the strongest part of our being in 2025.
- Perfecting young working saints through shepherding
- Saints blending together to build up the Body in love
- Establish a prayer life individually and corporately
- Pursuing truth and growth in life to be in the reality of the kingdom.
- Spreading the kingdom of God by preaching the gospel at WVC campus and community outreach in Pruneyard or neighborhood.
- Pray for the financial needs of FSCC and recurring donations (fremontsprings.org).

Announcements

- Life-study of 1 Peter MSG 13, 14.
- HWMR: Living a Christian life and Church life under the Government of God for the Economy of God, Week 2
- 3/25 (Tue.) Prayer meeting, 7:45pm, meeting hall.
- 3/28-30 YP conference, FSCC, \$70, deadline:3/16
- 4/12 10am Lessons on small groups with br Minoru:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89326774993?pwd=MkJYVU00RW5qcTV0WmlhNU1NNE5PZz09>
- 4/13 (Lord's Day) 10:00am. ITERO respeaking:
Chinese speaking: Church in Cupertino meeting hall
English speaking: Church in Santa Clara meeting hall
- 4/25-27 English speaking, Alpha house blending.
- 5/2-4 Chinese speaking Alpha house blending.
- 5/17 Gospel meeting in Chinese, Campbell meeting hall
- 6/7 Gospel meeting in English, Campbell meeting hall
- 6/30-7/5 Semiannual training, Registration by 5/1
- Financial Giving:
PayPal/Zelle: churchincampbell@gmail.com
[Venmo @Churchin-Campbell](https://www.venmo.com/Churchin-Campbell)
- Church in Campbell bookroom account (PayPal/Zelle):
churchincampbellbooks@gmail.com