



THE ORCHARD

Crave God's Spiritual Milk

1 Peter 2:1-10

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Introduction:

- For the past several weeks, we've been looking at what it looks like to live a faithful Christian life in a broken world.
 - What it looks like to honor God with our lives.
- And last time, we saw how we can honor God, when we love others with a sincere heart.
 - We can honor God by loving those who are difficult to love.
- But this raises an important question.
 - Is it really that important to grow in love?
 - Afterall, Peter has told us that our salvation is secure.
 - Our inheritance is being kept in heaven.
 - And so, someone might say:
 - "Is it really worth my time to work on love?"
 - Why should we fight to love our friends, to love our family, to love our neighbors?
- Loving others isn't always easy.
 - But Jesus says in John 13:
 - **"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."** John 13:35
 - More than knowing deep theology.
 - More than doing great works.
 - Jesus says that love is the mark of a Christian believer.



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- It's love that shows our faith.
- It's vital that we learn to love.
- And so, we'll see this morning:
 - How love is our distinct calling as followers of Christ.
 - Barriers we need to remove that keep us from love.
 - What it looks like to truly love others from the heart.
 - And how God's abiding word gives us strength to love.
 - That's our outline for this morning.

Point 1:

- First, we see from our passage how love is our distinct calling as followers of Christ.
 - Jesus Christ died for us, and loved us, so we could love others.
- Listen to what Peter says in chapter 1, verse 22:
 - **“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart...”** 1 Peter 1:22
- Obedience to the truth is another way of describing faith in the gospel.
 - Christian believers are people who obey the truth.
 - They receive the gospel.
- And because of that, the Holy Spirit has purified our souls.
 - We're forgiven of our sins.
 - We've been purified because we believed.
- But look at the next part.



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- **“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another...”**
1 Peter 1:22
- The goal of our salvation wasn’t simply to rescue us from hell, or to secure our place in heaven.
- God saved you, and he saved me, so we could love him, and love others.
- He saved us for a sincere brotherly love.
- If I hurt or wrong my wife.
 - I need forgiveness.
 - Now, why would I long for her forgiveness?
 - If the answer is because I want her to cook me dinner.
 - Or because I don’t want to sleep on the couch.
 - I’m just using her.
- Sadly, that’s how many people approach the gospel.
 - They want forgiveness, so they won’t be punished.
 - They don’t want judgment.
 - They just want the blessing.
 - But they don’t want God.
- But think about this.
 - The reason I want my wife to forgive me is because I want her.
 - I want the walls to come down.
 - I want the distance to disappear.
 - I want her to forgive me, because I love her.
- It’s the same with the gospel.
 - It’s not just about forgiveness.



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- It's about being reconciled to God, and being reconciled to others.
- It's about loving God.
- It's saying with the Psalmist in Psalm 63:
- **"Your love is better than life."** Psalm 63:3

- And that's exactly what Peter is saying in this verse.
 - You've been forgiven, not only to escape judgement.
 - But to love God and to love others.
 - It's not just about your salvation.
 - Love is our greatest calling as Christian believers.
 - **"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another..."**
1 Peter 1:22

- It may be that you're finding it hard to love someone today.
 - A friend, a family member, a co-worker, a neighbor, a child, maybe even someone on social media.
 - It may be that you've tried over and over again to love, but every time you think about that person, the hurt may come rushing back.

- But the good news is that love can be learned.
 - Because the love of Christ has been poured into our hearts, we're able to pour it out to others.
 - Because you've been shown mercy, you can give mercy.
 - Because you've been forgiven, you can forgive others.
 - Because you've been loved, you have power to love.

- Here we see how love is our calling as followers of Christ.

Point 2:



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- Second, not only do we see a picture of sincere love, we also see barriers that can keep us from loving others.
 - We see barriers we need to move.
- Take a look at 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 1.
 - **“So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.”** 1 Peter 2:1
 - Here we clearly see 5 barriers that can keep us from loving others.
- When you see a list in the Bible, it’s easy to quickly go through the list.
 - But let’s pause, and think through what these mean.
- First, the Bible states how we need to put away all malice.
 - Malice is more than anger.
 - It’s a desire to injure someone.
 - To get revenge.
 - It’s when you want to hurt someone, because they hurt you.
- And the place we’ll be tempted with malice is when someone commits wrong, and we want justice.
 - Now, of course, God commands us to seek justice, especially for those who can’t defend themselves.
 - But if we’re not careful, our desire for justice can become a desire for revenge.
 - And instead of wanting what’s right, we may want others to suffer.
 - And we’ll struggle to love, because we’ll become blind by malice.



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- When I was in my early twenties, a trusted family friend sold my mom a car.
 - But then a couple of years later, we found out this person used my mom's social security number, and credit score to finance another person's car.
 - We had no idea until we got the bill for the other car.
 - I was really mad.
 - I wanted to sue that person.
 - Because my pastor knew both of us, he had to calm me down.
 - And he needed to remind me of the difference between pursuing what's right, and seeking revenge.
 - Now of course, I made sure to contact the car dealer to fix the problem.
 - And I want to be clear.
 - There are times we need to call the police.
 - There are times we may need to take legal action.
 - The Apostle Paul even appealed to Caesar.
 - Because seeking justice isn't wrong.
 - But I had to remind myself, it wasn't up to me to judge, and punish the other person.
 - God was calling me to forgive, and to love, and to leave the outcome up to him.
 - And in the end, the man ended up facing the consequences for what he did.
 - Justice belonged to God.
 - But my calling was to love, and forgive, and to trust in God.

- And that's exactly what Peter is calling us to do as well.
 - To put away malice.



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- And instead to love, and forgive, and to trust God with justice.
- Second, he also calls us to put away deceit.
 - Deceit is the practice of hiding our motives.
 - Instead of honestly sharing your heart, it's calculating what you're going to say, to control the situation.
 - It's when our words appear loving on the surface, but underneath, we're trying to protect our image, or gain advantage, or control another person.
- For example:
 - It could be telling your boss you're not struggling at work, even though you're overwhelmed, because you don't want to look incompetent, or you want a promotion.
 - It could be avoiding a conversation and saying you're too busy, when the real reason is you're afraid.
 - It could even be your reason for serving, because you want recognition, or you want approval.
- When we're not honest with others, it'll be very hard to love.
 - Because you can't love someone you're trying to control.
 - But when we learn to be honest with ourselves and with others, that's when we can truly love with a sincere heart.
 - And so, we need to put away all deceit.
- Third, if we want to love, we also need to put away hypocrisy.
 - Hypocrisy is pretending to be someone you're not.
 - It's telling others to act a certain way, when you don't act in that way.
 - It's thinking you're better than others.



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- Jesus often called the Pharisees hypocrites, because they refused to confess their sin.
 - They thought they were better than others.
- Do you see what this is teaching us?
 - A hypocrite isn't someone who struggles with sin.
 - Because the truth is, every Christian struggles with sin.
 - Rather, a hypocrite is a person who never admits their sin.
- And a hypocrite will struggle to love because no one can really get to know them, because they keep pretending.
- But when you're honest about your weaknesses.
 - When you see you're a sinner like everyone else in the world, and you need God's grace.
 - That's when you can begin to love, because that's when you can begin to receive God's love.
- Fourth, the Bible calls us to put away envy.
 - Envy isn't only the practice of wanting what others have.
 - But it's being disappointed with God, because of what others have.
 - It's when you feel you deserve more.
- When David received greater praise than King Saul, Saul didn't just covet the praise that David received.
 - He tried to kill David so that he wouldn't be a threat.
 - His envy kept him from loving God, and loving David.
- In this life, others will receive gifts and blessings that we may not receive.



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- But if we hang on to envy, it can keep us from loving others and celebrating with them.
- But when we learn to be content with what God has given to us.
 - We can love others with a sincere heart.
 - We can rejoice when others rejoice.
- Fifth, Peter calls us to put away slander.
 - Slander isn't just using words to cut others down.
 - It's a desire to ruin someone's reputation.
 - It doesn't even have to be false information.
 - Slander can be speaking truth with the desire to put someone down.
- When someone hurts us, we may be tempted to slander that person.
 - But let's remember, words that cut someone down can never lead to love.
 - Even if what you're saying is true, when you judge others, it can't lead to love.
- In the heat of the moment, when emotions are high, we may become confused.
 - And so, let's think about the differences between love and slander.
 - Love covers over a multitude of sins.
 - While slander amplifies a multitude of sins.
 - Love seeks to restore.
 - While slander seeks to hurt.
 - Love goes to the person.
 - While slander goes to everyone but the person.



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- Let's put away all slander.
 - And love others, as Christ loved us.
 - In chapter 2, verse 23 Peter writes about how Jesus responded on the cross:
 - **“When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” 1 Peter 2:23**
- Malice says:
 - “I want to hurt you.”
- Deceit says:
 - “I want to control you.”
- Hypocrisy says:
 - “I want you to see how great I am.”
- Envy says:
 - “You don't deserve that.”
- Slander says:
 - “I want others to think less of you.”
- Which one would you say you're struggling with today?
 - Let's put them away, so we can love others, as Christ loved us.
- Here we see, barriers we need to remove.

Point 3:



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- Third, we see from our passage a picture of what it looks like to truly love others with a sincere heart.
- In verse 22, the Bible says that we're saved for a sincere brotherly love.
 - And so, we have to ask:
 - "What does it look like to love with a sincere brotherly love?"
- Well, Peter gives us the answer right here in our passage.
 - He says that sincere love is first of all earnest.
 - And then pure.
 - And then sacrificial.
- To begin, we're told that sincere love is earnest.
 - Take a look at chapter 1 verse 22.
 - **"Love one another earnestly from a pure heart...."** 1 Peter 1:22
- This word earnestly could also be translated as intensely or passionately.
- Now, I don't think this verse is commanding us to have passionate love for others.
 - I only have passionate love for my wife.
 - It would be inappropriate if we tried to love each other with passionate love.
- But rather, the Bible is calling us to be passionate about loving others.



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- In other words, the emphasis in this verse isn't on having stronger emotions.
- Rather, God is calling us to make a stronger effort.
- To be eager to show love.
- To go out of your way.
- To look for opportunities to love.

- It means that we're eager to welcome others to our church.
 - It means we're eager to encourage others not only at church, but also at work, and at home.
 - It means we're eager to pray for others.
 - To invite someone to dinner.
 - To serve wherever there's a need.

- To make an effort to care, to be passionate about love, that's what it means to make an earnest effort.

- Furthermore, this verse also speaks about loving others with a pure heart.
 - This can mean to love others without expecting anything in return.
 - To love others without seeking any recognition.

- But it's clear that it means much more than this.
 - In this verse, it means that we need to love others with the same love and grace Christ has given to us.
 - We've been purified and born again through the gospel.
 - And so, we need to love others with that pure gospel heart.
 - **“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another**



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earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again...” 1 Peter 1:22-23

- It’s true that people who don’t believe in Christ are able to love.
 - But their love can never reflect the grace and love of Christ.
 - There’s a limit to their love.
- But to love with a pure heart means that we love others, not with a love that comes from us.
 - But a love that comes from God.
 - Just as Jesus forgave us, and was patient with us, and pursued us when we turned away, and thought of us when we were his enemies.
 - We’re called to love others with that same love.
 - That’s what it means to love with a pure heart.
 - To love, with the love of Christ.
- We can love others with a sincere heart by being earnest.
 - We can love others with a pure heart, by showing the love of Christ.
 - And third, we can love others with a sincere heart by offering ourselves as a spiritual sacrifice.
- In chapter 2, verse 5, Peter says:
 - **“You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5**
 - God is building us up so that we can offer spiritual sacrifices like the priests in the Old Testament.



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- Now, this doesn't mean God wants us to sacrifice bulls and goats.
- Rather, we're called to offer ourselves as a sacrifice to God.
- A spiritual sacrifice is the sacrifice of our hearts, and our lives.
- It means we love others by sacrificing our time, and words, and energy, and even our comfort.
- There will be times, when it'll be difficult to love.
 - Because love requires that we humble ourselves, to lift others up.
 - But to sacrifice for others, that's true sincere love.
 - That's why Jesus says in John 15 verse 13:
 - **"Greater love has no one that this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."**
 - In other words, Jesus is saying the greatest way we can show love is by sacrificing for others.
- And here's the great thing about sacrificial love.
 - When you die to yourself, and use your freedom to serve others, you'll see that it bears much fruit for the glory of God.
 - Again, Jesus says:
 - **"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." John 12:24**
- Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice, and do you know what happened?
 - Many people were reconciled to God.
 - And many people will continue to find salvation until Christ returns.



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- In the same way, when you die to yourself, you'll see that God can bear much fruit through your sacrifice.
- I still remember my Awana leader from 6th grade.
 - His name was Shawn.
 - And I remember one night during Bible study, we were giving Shawn a really hard time.
 - I could tell he was tired from work.
 - He didn't even have time to eat dinner, so he had a Big Mac meal on the side that he wasn't even able to eat.
 - He was trying to get through the lesson, and we kept talking, and giving him a hard time.
 - And because I didn't know any better, instead of answering the Bible questions, I asked Shawn if he was going to eat his McDonalds meal.
 - With as much patience as he could muster up, he said to me:
 - "I was going to eat it, but go ahead Tom, feel free to eat the meal."
 - "Thanks Shawn!"
 - And I gulped it up.
 - He didn't know it at that time, but he was training up a future pastor.
 - In fact, he was training up many men, who would serve as leaders in the church.
 - He was offering himself up as a living sacrifice.
 - He was showing sincere love.
 - He was dying to himself.
 - And because of that, many of the boys in that class became faithful followers of Jesus Christ.
- Sincere heartfelt love requires an eagerness for love.



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- It requires a heart that loves with a pure heart, that loves as Christ loved us.
- And it requires a heart that sacrifices for others.
- And when we do this, we'll see that it can bear much fruit for the glory of God.

- And so, I want to ask you today.

- Do you have earnest love?
 - Is there someone you need to pursue?

- Or have you been withholding your love from someone in your life?
 - Is there someone you need to forgive, as Christ forgave you?

- Or perhaps for some of you, has it been a while since you've sacrificed yourself for others.
 - Is there a way God is calling you to serve?

- You know, we have a picnic later today.
 - And I really do hope you can come to show your love to others.
 - Let's seek to welcome one another.
 - To earnestly make an effort to get to know others.

- Here we see a picture of sincere love that God calls us to pursue.

Point 4:



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- Fourth and finally, we see from our passage, how the abiding word of God gives us strength to love.
 - Take a look at 1 Peter 1 verses 23 to 25.
 - **“Love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of the imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” 1 Peter 1:23-25**
- Peter knew that loving others wasn't easy.
 - He knew that love is really hard
 - Especially the Christ like love, God calls us to give.
- And so, why should we keep loving?
 - Why is it worth it?
- He gives the answer right here.
 - Because God's word never fails.
 - Though the grass fades, the word of the Lord will remain forever.
 - This means that God will fulfill every promise he's made to us.
- Think about every promise that God has made to you.
 - The promise that our inheritance is being kept in heaven for us.
 - That we're being guarded by God's power.
 - That our salvation is certain.
 - That our labor is never in vain.
 - That God is not unjust to overlook the love we've shown in serving others.



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- God is going to keep every promise he's made to us.
- That's why later in chapter 2, Peter encourages us to seek God's word, like infants long for milk.
 - Because it's through God's word, we can remind ourselves of the hope we have in Christ.
- And because Jesus will fulfill every promise, we can love others.
 - Because our future is secure in Christ, we can give ourselves to others, because we already everything in Christ.
 - In fact, that's the example we see in Jesus as well.
- Jesus was rejected by many, but he kept loving them.
 - Jesus was exhausted and tired, but he kept loving the people.
 - Jesus was betrayed by his disciples, but he kept loving them.
 - Jesus was reviled and mocked on the cross, but he kept loving the people, and died on the cross.
- Why?
 - Because he trusted the Father's unfailing word, that all this would end in resurrection and glory.
 - For the joy set before him, he endured the cross.
 - And it's the same for us.
- And so, Christian brother and sister:
 - Let's keep loving our church.
 - Let's keep loving our family members.
 - Let's keep loving our children.



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- Let's keep loving those who may have hurt us.
- Let's keep laying down our lives for others.

- Because in the end, it will end well for you.
 - Because God will fulfill every promise he's made to you.
 - The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of the Lord over you remains forever.
 - So, love earnestly, with a pure heart.