

1 Peter 1

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Tape #8224
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Let's turn in our Bibles now, to First Peter, chapter one.

Peter introduces himself as *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ*, There were many disciples of Jesus. They numbered into the hundreds. Of those who were disciples, he called twelve to be apostles. And of those twelve that were called to be apostles, Peter was one of them.

So, he introduces himself as, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, that is, one of the twelve. He doesn't say, Peter, the pope of the church, but sees himself only as one of twelve of those that were called to be apostles. He is writing *to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, They were strangers in these different countries. There were Jews who were living throughout the world. After the Babylonian captivity, only a small percentage of the Jews actually returned to live in Jerusalem. It is much like today when there is the nation of Israel, there are many Jews that have chosen to live in the various countries, where they have settled. And for a long time, there were more Jews in New York than there were in Israel. But they have settled throughout the world, and so at the time of Peter's writing, there were Jews who were living throughout Asia Minor, throughout the Roman province. On occasion, the Roman emperors would be angry and expel the Jews from Rome, but there were many living throughout the provinces of Asia minor. These territories or these places that Peter is listing, are places that are in present day Turkey. And so they are scattered throughout the area of Asia Minor.

But they are ²*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*: Notice you have again, the Father, the Spirit and the Son. Throughout the New Testament you find the mention of the Father, the Spirit and the Son, the three persons of the Godhead, the Trinity of the Godhead. And though the word, Trinity, itself, is not found. Yet, you find the three groups throughout the New Testament—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It's just interwoven throughout the whole New Testament.

Now they are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. When you get into the foreknowledge of God, you are getting into interesting territory that we cannot understand. How do you think when you know everything? Do you have to think, when you know everything? The foreknowledge of God, by that we mean, that God, and we say God is omniscient. He knows the end from the beginning.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, God challenges the false prophet to speak of something in advance of it taking place. But then to affirm that He is God, and there is none like unto Him, He said, who knows the end from the beginning. He then proves it by speaking of things that have not yet taken place and will not take place for years, sometimes centuries, sometimes millennia.

And thus God's foreknowledge means that God knows beforehand everything that is going to happen. God is never taken by surprise! And according to His foreknowledge, He did elect those that are to be saved.

Now that doesn't take away the fact that the door of salvation is open to all men! And this is a false conclusion that many people draw, when you speak of the omniscience, the foreknowledge of God, the election of God, they immediately jump to a false conclusion that not everyone has an equal opportunity to be saved. God has placed the offer of salvation to all men. You have words like, whosoever believeth in Him, shall not perish but have everlasting life.

So God's offer of salvation is to all men, whosoever will receive, will respond, will believe, in His Son, Jesus Christ! And man is responsible in making his choice. And so the foreknowledge of God and the election of God, do not take away from the free moral agency of man. It just so happens that knowing everything, that God does know who will respond, who will believe. If you make it to heaven, God is not going to be surprised! You might! But God won't look and say, "How did you get here"? My, what a surprise! What a shock! Because if God will ever know who is going to respond to His grace and His love, He has always known who will respond. And so from the divine standpoint, elect, because God knew that you would respond to His offer of salvation, to His love, and thus, knowing that you would respond, you are

spoken of as elect of God.

Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, but through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been given to us to give us power to live a victorious life in Christ Jesus. We can't do it ourselves.

If you want a good picture of a man who has become aware and conscious of God's requirements and is seeking to fulfill them in his own abilities and strengths, read Romans, chapter seven, the last few verses. And you have Paul's struggle to be sanctified by his own abilities, the powers of his flesh. And you see him struggling until he finally cries out for help. Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me? And then as you go into chapter eight, you discover the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of God does within us what we cannot do for ourselves. And thus we recognize the importance of the power of the Spirit of God working in us to enable us to be what God requires us to be—sanctified by the Spirit, unto the obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Now in the Old Testament you remember when God sent Moses to Pharaoh to demand the release of the children of Israel, and God brought upon the Egyptians, the various plagues, the final and the climactic plague that God brought on the Egyptians was the death of the first born. But God commanded Moses to instruct the children of Israel, to take a lamb out of their flock. To kill it and to put the blood in a basin. And with a hyssop bush, sprinkle the blood of that lamb upon the lintels and the doorposts of their houses. And the Lord said, when I pass through the land, when I see the blood, I will pass over that house.

The sprinkling of blood, and thus it was foreshadowing Jesus Christ and His blood that would be shed for our sin. And thus the idea of the sprinkling of blood over our lives, we have passed from death to life. Death does not have a hold or a demand on us.

As children of God, we will be changed. We will not die! Jesus said, he who lives and believes in Me shall never die. We will one day, move out of these bodies into the building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Paul calls this body a tent. And he said we know that when this earthly tent is dissolved, when my body returns to dust, we have a building of God. Jesus said in My Father's house are many mansions. And we have this building of God, not made with hands, which is eternal in the heavens. So then we then, who are who are in these bodies, in these tents, often groan as we desire to be delivered from the restrictions of the body, especially as we age and the body is no longer capable of fulfilling all of the desires that we might have. And we find the body becomes a prison, sometimes a prison of pain, of suffering. And God in His love, releases our spirits from these bodies. We don't die! We only move! We move from the tent into the house, the building of God not made with hands. And so we've been elected by God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and of course of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, upon our lives. And we have been saved from the power of death and sin.

So to them, he declares, *Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied*. Grace and peace, the Siamese twins, of the New Testament. And evidently it was a very common type of a greeting, because Paul in all of his epistles, begins the epistle with grace and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ! So these are taking really the word of greeting from the Greek and combining it with the word of greeting in the Hebrew, from the Hebrews. And putting them together, you have grace and peace. When you would meet a Grecian person, from the Grecian culture, there on the street, they would say to you, grace! And it's a word of beauty. If you would meet a Jew, he would say, Shalom, peace! And so, combining the two common greetings of grace and peace, it was common among the early Christians, no doubt, because Paul uses it over and over. And here now, it's Peter, using it. That's the opening salutation.

Now he gets into the body of his letter. He plunges right into it.

He said, ³*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*, Blessed be God! Or praise! This particular word, blessed, here, is a word for praise. Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because we have been born again! We've been begotten again, born again, unto a living hope. That word lively is an old English word. And it is a living hope! We as Christians have a glorious hope for the future. The Bible speaks of the blessed hope, of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. We have a hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ. We have a hope for the

coming kingdom of God! A Christian's life is filled with hope! But it's more than just hope! It's a living hope! And it is alive because it is predicated on the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

The heart of the gospel is that Jesus rose from the dead. Paul said the gospel that we preach unto you, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. When you go through the Book of Acts and you find the preaching of the early church, centered on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The first message preached by Peter after the Holy Spirit had come upon the church, in the second chapter of the Book of Acts, was a sermon concerning Jesus of Nazareth. He had seven things to say about Him. The fourth thing was that God raised Him from the dead. That was the heart of the message. And that is always the heart of the message of the church. Our hope is more than just a hope. It's a living hope because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! If there is no resurrection, there is no hope! Our hope is based upon the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Without that, we of all men, be most pitied.

And so he is praising God the Father because we've been born again to this living hope by the resurrection of Jesus.

But, it's more than that! ⁴*To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,* The hope of the inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, that is, fades not away, reserved in heaven for you! Paul speaks of the glorious inheritance of the saints in light. He said because we are sons, we are then heirs, heirs of God. And thus each one of you are rich beyond comparison. Each one of you who have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ have entered into an inheritance that is incorruptible. It's undefiled! It's fades not away! It's reserved in heaven for you! It's got your name on it!

Have you ever gone to a dinner where they have the names on the table? You go around and find your name. That spot's reserved for you. Well, there's an inheritance up there in heaven with your name on it. It's reserved for you. It's incorruptible. It's undefiled. It doesn't fade away. You know people put their stock in earthly treasures, that can corrupt. Jesus said, don't put your treasure here on earth, where moth and rust can corrupt it or where thieves can steal it. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

This glorious inheritance, undefiled. It fades not away. Reserved in heaven for you, ⁵*Who are kept by the power of God* Now the Scripture always has God's part and it always has man's part! But God's part is always first and predominant! Man's part is secondary. But it is interesting that most preaching emphasizes man's part rather than God's part. And so often you hear preaching of what you should be doing for God, emphasizing man's part of the deal! Where the real Scriptural emphasis is God's parts—what God has done for you!

Take the Book of Ephesians, Paul begins by saying, much like Peter says here, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said, thanks be unto God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus in heavenly places. Against God, for what He has done—thank God for what He has done! The blessings that God has given. And he spends the first three chapters of Ephesians, telling you all that God has done for you! Telling you all that God has done for you, telling you all that God has made available for you of His glorious resources, that which is available for you! And after having spent three chapters telling you all that you are and all that you have, as a child of God, he then says, in chapter four, now walk worthy of this calling wherewith you were called. Then he gets to man's part.

But so often in preaching, we skip the first three chapters of Ephesians and get right to man's part. Now you walk in love and you—you know. We are telling you how to walk. But we don't let you know the resources available to help you to walk. And without the first three chapters, you can only get frustrated in chapter four of Ephesians. You have to lay the foundation of what God has done.

Now here Peter is giving you God's part. Thanks be unto God, or blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again. Born again. The Bible says not by the will of man or the will of flesh, but by the will of God. So thanks be unto God who has first of all begotten us again to this living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. To an inheritance that's incorruptible, undefiled, fades not away, that's reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God.

Now so far, nothing for you to do! This is all God's part. He sent His Son to die for your sins. He sent

His Spirit by which you might be born again. He has given to you an inheritance. He is reserving it for you. And now He is keeping you for it. Kept by the power of God.

You say, well, don't I have any part at all? Yes, read on, *through faith*. You say, what else? That's all! Through faith, you see God has done it. It's just up to you to believe it, to trust Him for it. We make so big a deal over man's part. But man's part is really just to believe and to trust God.

One day they came to Jesus and they said, what works must we do to do the works of the Father? And that's a question that we often ask. What can I do? What work can I do for God? And Jesus said, this is the work of the Father. That you believe on Him whom He has sent. What else? Just believe on Him, whom He has sent! Kept by the power of God through faith. God has made it so easy, that all of us can attain.

Kept by the power of God through faith *unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (days)*.
⁶*Wherein ye greatly rejoice*, That is in the hope. The hope of being called by God into the family of God. And we rejoice in this hope.

though now (Paul said) *for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations* (or testing): Now we as Christians do go through testing. More and more, we realize that somehow we just don't fit in this world, as it is given over to sin and to lawlessness. We realize we don't fit here! Because we are different, the world marks us and the world will ridicule us. The world will call us names like bigot and narrow-minded, because we do not accept the polluted standards of the world, we are looked upon as odd and weird.

And thus we often go through heavy trials because we do believe in honesty and integrity, and those things aren't so popular or important anymore in the minds of many people. But because we do stand up and say that's not right! They find fault with us.

But yet Jesus said, blessed are ye when men persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for grace is your reward in heaven. So when you are going through a time of testing, a time of persecution, it's time to rejoice by looking ahead to the reward that we have, in heaven.

So we look to this glorious inheritance, that is incorruptible, undefiled, but fades not away, reserved in heaven for us who are kept by the power of God through our faith in Jesus Christ. And so we greatly rejoice even though for a time we are going through some pretty heavy situations, because of our faith through Jesus Christ.

⁷*That the trial of your faith*, or the testing of your faith, he said, *being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire*, (That it) *might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*: So these testings of our faith are refining. So oftentimes when things are not going well—we are being put to the fire. Satan often comes along and says, well if God really loves you then why would God allow you to be going through this and having all these problems, you know. Well, he is trying to infer that God is somehow punishing you because you haven't been living up to His standards. In reality, God is testing our faith. The trial of our faith, the testing of our faith, is really more precious than gold that perishes. That is, gold isn't going to last. It's going to perish. The value of gold is established by man, but it's something that is rare here on earth, but not in heaven. They use it for asphalt in heaven. So gold perishes, that is the value of it. But the reward that we have in heaven.

So we look and we rejoice in the promises and in the hope that we have. We realize that the refining fires of God are intended for purifying even as gold is heated until it melts, so that they can then draw off the dross. It's for the purifying of the gold that's put in the fire. So it's for the purifying of our lives, that God sometimes allows us to go into the fire—this trial or the testing of our faith. That we might found unto the praise and the honor and the glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ! When the Lord comes, we're to the praise of the glory of His grace!

⁸*Whom* (that is Jesus Christ) *having not seen, ye love*; Now, he is writing to the Jews that are scattered throughout Asia Minor. They have come to believe in Jesus Christ. Of course, Paul had been preaching over there. Paul was not allowed to go into Bithynia, you remember. The Spirit prevented him to go to Bithynia. But Peter probably went to Bithynia and that's probably why the Lord would not allow Paul to go. The gospel had preached there. And God wanted the gospel to be spread over into the European continent and

sent Paul on over to Greece. But the people had never seen Jesus, but hearing of Him. Hearing of His sacrifice, laying down His life for them, to provide for them the forgiveness of sin to make possible for them, fellowship with God. They, like us, had come to love Him! Though they had never seen Him. And tonight we have such great love for Jesus Christ that we would lay down our lives for Him though we have never seen Him, yet we love Him!

in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing (And there's the key! Believing in Him), *ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*: Believing in Him, we rejoice with joy that is indescribable and full of glory. The faith just brings overflowing joy, indescribable joy, full of glory!

And ⁹*Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*. And so he is dealing with here the subject of faith. We are kept by the power of God through faith and we believe in Him and thus rejoice. And the ultimate fruit of our faith is our salvation.

¹⁰*Of which salvation the prophets* (he said), *have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you*: Now what he is saying is that when the prophets were prophesying concerning the coming Messiah, there were aspects of their prophesies that they didn't understand. They studied them. And they sought to understand, but they did not understand how God would pour out such grace and love upon all who would believe—Gentile believers along with Jewish believers. They studied diligently the prophesies, seeking to understand just what God was promising. When He spoke of the Messiah, for instance, in Isaiah 53—suffering, dying. He spoke of the Messiah in Psalm 22—suffering, dying. They didn't understand it. They sought diligently and they searched to understand this grace that God would bestow upon us.

¹¹*Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify*, When and how is this going to happen?

when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Because there seemed to be such a diversity of prophesies concerning the Messiah, prophesies that dealt with His suffering, prophesies that dealt with His exaltation, the glory of the Messiah' reign, reigning over all the earth. Ask of Me, I'll give you the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions. And thou shall rule them as with a rod of iron. And these glorious prophesies of sitting on the throne of David, ordering it and establishing it in righteousness and judgment, forever.

But then who has believed our report? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? And as He begins to speak of His suffering, wounded for our transgressions! Bruised for our iniquities! The chastisement of our peace on Him and with His stripes are healed! All of us like sheep have gone astray, but God laid on Him the iniquities of us all! He was bruised! He was afflicted! And we did esteem Him, smitten of God! They couldn't understand. How can He be bruised? How can He be rejected, despised and rejected of men? A Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, numbered with transgressors at His death? How can that be and also in reigning eternally over the world?

And because there were such diverse prophesies, they were confused. So they searched and they studied diligently to discover the plan of God, but Paul speaks of the mysteries that are hidden from those in times past, but are not being revealed. And in the New Testament, the word, mystery, means a revelation that is now being given by God, an understanding of things that were not understood before. As God is giving further light and revelation on these things.

And so in the New Testament, because of the advantage of looking back now, we can see and understand the prophesies that even the prophets themselves didn't understand when they wrote and searched diligently trying to figure out just what is this suffering and glory, that is to follow? We know what it is! He suffered for our sins! He was wounded for our transgressions! But He's coming back again! And He's going to reign in glory over all the earth! And we, His church, will live and reign with Him! And so the suffering and the glory that was to follow. And they were searching this out. They were studying this and they just didn't understand. The sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow the suffering.

Paul, writing to the Philippians said, He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery or something to be grasped, to be equal with God, took upon Himself the form of a man. He humbled Himself, came in the likeness of man. And as a servant, He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. In

other words, the prophesy that spoke of that. But then Paul went on to say, wherefore God has also highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father!

That's the glory that shall follow! You see, He emptied Himself. He came in the form of man, but yet, God has given Him a name above every name and every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord. And thus, highly exalted. And they, in the Old Testament, just didn't understand it. We do understand it now because He came and He suffered and He died. But we believe that He is coming again to reign in righteousness over the earth.

So ¹²*Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.* The angels are curious of the grace of God that is given unto and the power of God that has been placed in our lives by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Now Peter is saying, when they wrote these things they weren't writing them for themselves, or for the people of that time. They were writing these things for us. That's why the Old Testament is so important for the understanding of the New Testament. That is why we go through the whole Bible and study the prophecies. And we discover that they were writing these things for our benefit as they spoke of the Messiah that would come and that would suffer and would die, but yet would rule and reign over the earth.

¹³*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, Tighten up the things in your head. be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation (or the unveiling) of Jesus Christ;* So look forward. Gird up your minds! Be sober! Be diligent! And have this hope for the end, when Jesus shall reign at the time of His appearing or His revelation.

¹⁴*As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:* When you look at man giving himself over to his lust, and when you really look at it logically, it doesn't make sense that a man would destroy himself because of his lust or his appetite. Giving himself over to his lust. Bringing destruction on himself, doesn't make sense.

Lorraine Day, a physician, who used to be in charge of the surgical department of the hospital in San Francisco that's related to the university of medicine there. When she began to study the AIDS virus and realized that so many of the patients that she was operating on, were infected with the AIDS virus, became very alarmed, so much so that she resigned her position there. And in studying the AIDS virus and the practices by which this virus is transmitted from one person to another, she made an interesting statement. She said though these men realize that their practicing of sex has deadly effects, their desire, their abnormal desire for sex, even exceeds their desire for life. So they go on with these practices though they know it is exposing them to death!

So I would suggest that doesn't make sense! God said, come now, let's reason together, saith the Lord. And when you start looking at things reasonably, it doesn't make sense to give yourself over to your fleshly desires that in so doing, you are bringing destruction upon yourself. That's ignorance! And so he tells us, as obedient children, not fashioning yourself according to the former lusts in your ignorance.

¹⁵*But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;* Be ye holy in your whole manner of life. God's called us unto holiness, unto purity. As Christians, we should seek to live a holy life, a pure life, a wholesome life! God's called us to that.

Now those in the world are not concerned with holiness or righteousness or purity. In fact they disdain holiness or purity. But God has called us to be a holy people, not to be caught up in the worldly fashions or patterns.

And as he who has called you is holy, be ye holy in your manner of living; ¹⁶*Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.* God's word to us!

¹⁷*And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:* When we stand before God, before Jesus Christ, and be judged, His judging us will be without respect of persons. We all stand on the same level when we stand

before God. He is no respecter of persons! And realizing that one day I must give an account of myself to the Lord Jesus Christ, I need to be very concerned in how I live. That I do live in holiness and that I do live in purity. So pass the time of your sojourning. You're just sojourning here. You're just passing through. Life is but a vapor. It appears for a moment and then vanishes. And so for this moment, we are here, let's seek to make the most of it and live our lives according to his pattern and standard.

¹⁸*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, From that empty life that you received from the traditions of your body, the empty life of the world. It has and gives tremendous promises, but they are empty. It never comes through.*

Satan promised that she would be as God. She was attracted and enticed by that promise. It never came through. And so the world makes great promises, but it never fulfills them. He calls it the empty manner of life that you once lived, the life that you received by the traditions of your fathers.

You were redeemed, not with silver or gold, *from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;* ¹⁹*But with the precious blood of Christ,* He paid the price! And it was His death, that was the price of your redemption—the precious blood of Jesus was shed for your sin to redeem you from the power of sin and from the empty life that you once lived!

And so, but with the precious blood of Christ, *as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:* Now it was required that the sacrifices that they brought to God be perfect. God would not accept the sacrifice of an animal that was sickly or missing an eye or had scars, had been torn by a wolf or whatever. God wouldn't accept road-kill! It had to be the best, when you sacrificed it to God. It had to be without spot or blemish.

Now a spot was an inherent defect. Whereas a blemish was an acquired defect. The spot came as a result of the genes, whereas the blemishes came as a result of an encounter with the wolf or a coyote or something like that, where the lamb was marred or scarred.

Jesus, as our sacrificial Lamb was without spot, because God was His heavenly Father, there was not inherent sin. He was born without sin! But He also lived a life without blemish.

Now Adam was without spot, but he became blemished. Jesus was without spot or without blemish. He did not succumb to the temptations of Satan, but overcame Him and thus was without blemish. And thus the perfect sacrifice for man's sin.

²⁰*Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,* We talked in the beginning about God's foreknowledge. Before God ever created this world, He planned to create man and place him on this world, that He might have meaningful fellowship and love with His created beings.

Now, in His foreknowledge, He knew that man would fail! He knew that man would make wrong choices! But even He knew that man would make wrong choices, He still gave him the capacity of choice, because if there is no capacity for choice, man becomes a robot, and thus, you cannot have a meaningful relationship with a robot! It may obey you, but it can't give you meaningful love. It may be designed to put its arms around you, or to hold your hand. It may be designed to kiss you with its steel lips and by the responses to the keys that you press, it might even speak words of love to you. But they are meaningless because it's automatic, it's automated. It's a robot.

God could have created you as a robot, but He wanted meaningful love. And thus, choice has to be involved for love to be meaningful. And you can choose to love God or you can choose to hate God. Choice is involved for meaningful love. The choice is of no value if there is nothing to choose.

So God had to place that tree in the garden, that He put the "forbidden" sign on, so that man would have something to choose. And He did that with full knowledge that man would choose to eat of that tree. But His desire for meaningful love was so strong that He was willing to allow to man to make that mistake and to eat of that tree and to experience the consequences of eating of that tree! But God loved and desired love so much, that in His foreknowledge, knowing that man would eat of that tree, and leave from the fellowship of God to follow after his own lust, He planned to demonstrate the depth of His love for man. When man came to the awareness and consciousness of the problems that sin brought, the bondage that sin brought, that God would provide redemption and salvation for that man by sending His Son to take man's sin and to die in man's place. The supreme demonstration of love! So that man seeing how much that God did love him,

would respond to that love, by loving God and returning that love to God.

As we saw back there in verse eight, whom having not seen, yet you love. Why? Because He loved me so very much, He paid the price to redeem me from that empty life that was bound by the power of sin and darkness! He set me free! And thus, I love Him! And for His foreknowledge, knowing that you and I would respond to His love, His love manifested in Jesus Christ. He was willing to go through this whole thing for those that He knew would respond to the love and would receive His love and would live in that loving relationship with Him.

And so according to the foreknowledge of God, He was foreordained before the foundation of the world to come and to die for our sins. To demonstrate to us, how much God loves us. And so Peter when he was preaching on the Day of Pentecost, and he spoke of Jesus. How He was proved to be of God by the signs and the miracles, which He did among you, who knew, he said by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, have crucified and slain. God knew that that would be man's response to His Son and the message that His Son brought. He knew that it would be a threat to the phony religious leaders, who would be determined to get rid of Him. And He sent His Son with the design and the plan that His Son would be crucified, to experience the most tortuous painful death possible, in order to reveal to you the depth of God's love for you! So foreordained to be crucified.

²¹*Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead,* There we have again the heart of the message. The gospel isn't complete.

It isn't the death, it's not the complete gospel, who raised Him from the dead *and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.* All of this was done by God in order that your faith and your hope might be in Him.

²²*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren,* None of the phony love, but unfeigned love.

He then said, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:* That's God's desire, that we love each other with a pure heart, fervently.

²³*Being born again,* Thanks be unto God, or blessed be God, the Father, who has begotten us again.

Being born again, *not of corruptible seed,* Not by the will of man or the will of the flesh, but by the will of God. And what is that seed, by which we have been born again? The seed, which was planted, that brought forth this new life that we have in Christ. It's the Word of God!

You remember Jesus in the kingdom parable, talked about the sower that went forth to sow, and how the seed fell on various types of soil. Some by the wayside, some on good soil, some on stony ground and you know, on some among thorns. And then he said, now the seed is the Word of God. Now the idea of the seed, is that which has the genetic design and the factors for the reproducing of itself. And it's like the male seed that is planted in the female, that brings forth the new life. So the Word of God, planted in your heart, brings forth Spiritual life—born again by the Word of God, by this incorruptible seed.

but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. To think that we have the blessed privilege of gathering and studying the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. It's alive. It's powerful. And it's sharper than a two-edged sword. It's alive! It's powerful!

Jesus said, heaven and earth shall pass away. One day this universe is just going to go up in a big bang. They talk about it originating with a big bang. I have questions about that. But I know that it's going to end with a big bang! Peter tells us about that. We'll get to that in a few chapters.

But we have been born again by the Word of God, that lives and abides forever.

²⁴*For all flesh is as grass,* Not is grass, but is as grass.

and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The glory of man, it is so fleeting. It is so passing. I may mention names like Rita Hayworth or Betty Grable or Virginia Mayo, and you young people say, who are they? Oh, when I was young, they were great stars. They were the pin-up girls. But you see the glory of the world is like the glory of a flower, that fades and dies. Ginger Rogers, you know, you look those that are still alive and you look at their pictures today, and you realize the glory of the world is like the glory of the flowers, the fields, have faded and are passing away.

All flesh is as grass. All the glory of man is as the flower of grass. *The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:* That's the world! The passing glory of the world.

²⁵*But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.* God's Word, it's so glorious! It endures forever! It brings life! It brings new life of the Spirit, that is planted in our hearts, in that fertile soil, and then it brings forth fruit. Fruit of righteousness, holiness, purity, in our lives. Jesus said, now you are clean through the Word, which I have spoken unto you. The cleansing power of God's Word in our life. It's alive! It's powerful!

Father, we thank You for Your Word, for the opportunity of gathering tonight to study the Word. And we thank You, Lord, that You have promised that Your Word will not return unto You void, but would accomplish the purposes for which You have sent it. And because You have sent Your Word to give us new life, new power, new strength, so Lord, may we be strengthened through the study of Your Word tonight. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.