

Lesson 4
1 Peter 1: 22 – 2: 10
Christian Unity and Harmony

Memory verse: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." John 17:17 (NIV)

As Christians so many times we forget that out on the Hill of the Skull there was one who caught the full impact of falling man, who caught us when we would have been crushed in death. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed. He made Himself expendable for us and certainly we ought to express gratitude.

Gratitude is what we ought to have to the Lord Jesus Christ for catching our fallen souls and bearing the full weight of them and being Himself crushed through His own goodness to us. Peter began this wonderful epistle with a marvellous discussion of salvation. Beginning in verse 1 right on through verse 12, he discussed the glory of salvation. And now he is talking about the grateful response to salvation. First of all, how we respond to God was his theme in verses 13 through 21. And there he called us to a proper response to God, responding with deep gratitude that would lead us to three things, hope, holiness and honour. And as we come to verse 22 he calls for a second response, a response toward others. If we are genuinely grateful for Christ having caught us when we were falling to our death, then we should have a proper response toward God and we should have a proper response toward others. And what is to be our response to one another? How are we to treat each other, all of us who have been given salvation? The answer comes in that wonderful statement, "Fervently love one another." Love one another. Our response toward God: Verse 13, fix your hope. Verse 15, be holy. That's the right response toward God.

And then we are to have a reverent fear of God as well. We are to have a reverent awe of the One who reigns above. But in regard to each other, very simple, we are to love each other. That's the proper fruit of salvation directed to each other. Peter learned from Jesus about love (John 13:34) and he passes it on here.

Other New Testament writers repeat this same command which is to be the mark of Christians. In fact, Jesus said, "By this will all men know that you're My disciple." Paul, in Romans 12:10 says, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love." In Philippians chapter 2, Paul says that we are to maintain the same love toward one another. Perhaps you remember Hebrews chapter 13 where it says in verse 1, "Let love of the brethren continue." And 1 John 3:11, John brings it up, it's a major theme with him, "This is the message which you have heard from the beginning that we should love one another." So it's a basic Christian message. Peter says it, Paul says it, the writer of Hebrews says it and John says it. They say it because Jesus said it..

Yet, one of the painful facts of life is that the people of God do not always get along with each other. You would think that those who walk in hope and holiness would be able to walk in harmony, but this is not always true. From God's divine point of view, there is only one body (see Eph. 4:4–6), but what we see with human eyes is a church divided and sometimes at war. There is today a desperate need for spiritual unity.

To learn in this lesson: 1) the family of God 2) A royal priesthood with Christ as cornerstone 3) A holy nation in a darkened world.

Discussion Questions:

1).What is the implication when we consider the fact that we are children in the same family of God in Chapter 1:22 to chapter 2:3?

2). How would the vivid picture of the church with Christ as the cornerstone and believers being "a holy and royal priesthood" encourage us to strive for spiritual unity? (Refer to verses chapter 2, verses 4 to 9)

3). Christians are called to be a holy nation by God. How would this passage impact our attitude when we interact with believers in the family of God?