

## A LIVING HOPE – LIVING IN HARMONY TOGETHER

**1 PETER 1:22 – 2:10** ENCOURAGES CHRISTIANS TO ‘WALK IN HARMONY’ TOGETHER

“NOW THAT YOU HAVE PURIFIED YOURSELVES BY OBEYING THE TRUTH SO THAT YOU HAVE SINCERE LOVE FOR YOUR BROTHERS, LOVE ONE ANOTHER [FERVENTLY &] DEEPLY, FROM THE [A PURE] HEART.” (1 PETER 1:22). IF CHRISTIANS ‘WALK IN HOPE’ (1 PETER 1:1-12) AND ‘WALK IN HOLINESS’ (1 PETER 1:13-21),

CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE ABLE TO ‘WALK IN HARMONY’ TOGETHER. SADLY, THIS IS NOT ALWAYS TRUE. FROM GOD’S PERSPECTIVE, THERE IS ONLY ONE BODY - THE CHURCH. SADLY, OUR HUMAN IMPERFECTIONS CREATE DIVISIONS. AS CHRISTIANS, WE NEED SPIRITUAL UNITY. NOTE: SPIRITUAL UNITY DOES NOT MEAN WE HAVE TO BE THE SAME. UNITY IS DIFFERENT FROM UNIFORMITY. WE LIVE IN HARMONY TOGETHER BECAUSE, WE ARE

1. CHILDREN IN THE SAME FAMILY. (1 PETER 1:22-2:3) “NOW THAT YOU HAVE PURIFIED YOURSELVES BY OBEYING THE TRUTH SO THAT YOU HAVE SINCERE LOVE FOR YOUR BROTHERS [AND SISTERS], LOVE ONE ANOTHER DEEPLY, FROM THE HEART.” (1 PET 1:22). THE APOSTLE PETER OUTLINES THREE COMMON FACTORS THAT WE SHARE:

- a) EXPERIENCED THE SAME BIRTH (V.23-25). “FOR YOU HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN, NOT OF PERISHABLE SEED, BUT OF IMPERISHABLE, THROUGH THE LIVING AND ENDURING WORD OF GOD.” (1 PETER 1:23) THE ONLY WAY TO BECOME PART OF GOD’S SPIRITUAL FAMILY IS BY A SPIRITUAL BIRTH THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS. OUR FIRST BIRTH WAS A BIRTH OF FLESH WHICH LEADS TO DEATH. IF WE TRY TO BUILD UNITY IN OUR CHURCH BY HUMAN EFFORT,

THEN WE WILL FAIL. BUT IF WE BUILD UNITY BASED ON THE NEW BIRTH THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED IN JESUS, THEN IT WILL SUCCEED. B) EXPRESS THE SAME LOVE (V.22). THE APOSTLE PETER USES TWO DIFFERENT GREEK WORDS FOR LOVE IN V.22. "SINCERE LOVE FOR YOUR BROTHERS" IS PHILADELPHIA, MEANING 'BROTHERLY LOVE'. "LOVE ONE ANOTHER DEEPLY", IS AGAPE, WHICH IS GOD-LIKE, SACRIFICIAL AND UNCONDITIONAL LOVE; A DEFINITE DECISION TO TREAT PEOPLE THE WAY THAT JESUS WOULD TREAT THEM. AS CHRISTIANS, WE SHARE BOTH KINDS OF LOVE. WE SHARE 'BROTHERLY OR SISTERLY' LOVE, BECAUSE WE ARE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, I.E. WE LIKE BEING WITH EACH OTHER. WE ALSO SHARE AGAPE LOVE, BECAUSE, IN CHRIST, WE CAN OVERLOOK ANY DIFFERENCES. C) ENJOY THE SAME NOURISHMENT (V.1-3). "LIKE NEWBORN BABIES, CRAVE PURE SPIRITUAL MILK [OF THE WORD], SO THAT BY IT YOU MAY GROW UP IN YOUR SALVATION," (1 PETER 2:2) AS CHRISTIANS, THE SPIRITUAL MILK THAT WE CRAVE IS GOD'S WORD – THE BIBLE. GOD'S WORD HAS LIFE; GOD'S WORD GIVES LIFE; GOD'S WORD NOURISHES LIFE. IF WE STOP FEEDING ON GOD'S WORD, WE WILL STOP GROWING AS CHRISTIANS. CONVERSELY, WHEN WE ARE BEING FED BY GOD'S WORD, WE BECOME PEACEMAKERS, NOT TROUBLEMAKERS – AND WE PROMOTE SPIRITUAL UNITY IN THE CHURCH. GOLDSTONE CHURCH, HOVE [WWW.GOLDSTONECHURCH.ORG.UK](http://WWW.GOLDSTONECHURCH.ORG.UK) THESE FACTORS SHOW HOW MUCH WE HAVE IN COMMON AS CHILDREN IN GOD'S FAMILY. WE SHARE THE SAME BIRTH, THE SAME LOVE, AND THE SAME NOURISHMENT. AS CHRISTIANS TODAY, AS WE EMBRACE THE FULL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRUTH, WE WILL BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH AND TO BRING GOD THE GLORY THAT HE DESERVES. WE LIVE IN HARMONY TOGETHER BECAUSE, WE ARE

2. CLERICS IN THE SAME TEMPLE. (1 PETER 2:5) “YOU ALSO, LIKE LIVING STONES, ARE BEING BUILT INTO A SPIRITUAL HOUSE TO BE A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.” (1 PETER 2:5) AS CHRISTIANS, WE ARE A “HOLY PRIESTHOOD” AND A “ROYAL PRIESTHOOD” (V.9). THESE PHRASES ARE DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS. ““YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER, IN THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.”” (HEBREWS 5:6B). THIS VERSE REFERS TO ABRAHAM’S MEET OF KING MELCHIZEDEK (GENESIS 14). THE POINT IS THAT JESUS IS BOTH A PRIEST AND A KING – A UNIQUE COMBINATION. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, NO KING IN ISRAEL SERVED AS A PRIEST. {ONE KING TRIED TO BE A PRIEST, BUT GOD JUDGED HIM – WITH LEPROSY!} THE APOSTLE PETER PRESENTS JESUS’ UNIQUE CREDENTIALS: JESUS IS BOTH PRIEST AND KING. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, GOD’S PEOPLE HAD A PRIESTHOOD; BUT NOW, BECAUSE OF JESUS, GOD’S PEOPLE ARE A PRIESTHOOD. AS CHRISTIANS, WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF COMING INTO GOD’S HOLY PRESENCE. JESUS HAS TAKEN OUR SINS AWAY LEAVING US ELIGIBLE TO SERVE AS PRIESTS IN GOD’S HOLY PRESENCE. OUR DAILY LIVES NEED TO BE LIVED AS THOUGH WE ARE PRIESTS IN GOD’S HOLY TEMPLE. IT IS A HUGE PRIVILEGE TO SERVE AS A PRIEST, WORKING TOGETHER AT THE DIRECTION AND LEADING OF JESUS, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST. AS THERE IS ONLY ONE HIGH PRIEST, THERE IS UNITY AND HARMONY BETWEEN GOD’S PEOPLE; WE WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH AND TO BRING GOD THE GLORY THAT HE DESERVES. WE LIVE IN HARMONY TOGETHER BECAUSE WE ARE:

3. CITIZENS IN THE SAME NATION. (1 PETER 2:9-10) “BUT YOU ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE BELONGING TO GOD, THAT YOU MAY DECLARE THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO CALLED YOU OUT OF

DARKNESS INTO HIS WONDERFUL LIGHT. ONCE YOU WERE NOT A PEOPLE, BUT NOW YOU ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD; ONCE YOU HAD NOT RECEIVED MERCY, BUT NOW YOU HAVE RECEIVED MERCY.” (1 PETER 2:9-10) THE APOSTLE PETER USES FOUR PHRASES TO DESCRIBE GOD’S TREASURED POSSESSION. WE’VE ALREADY LOOKED AT “ROYAL PRIESTHOOD”, SO WE LOOK AT THE OTHER PHRASES: A) A CHOSEN PEOPLE. THE WORD “CHOSEN” SPEAKS OF GOD’S GRACE AND HIS LOVE TO EACH ONE OF US. AS CHRISTIANS, WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN. “YOU DID NOT CHOOSE ME, BUT I CHOSE YOU AND APPOINTED YOU SO THAT YOU MIGHT GO AND BEAR FRUIT – FRUIT THAT WILL LAST – AND SO THAT WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME THE FATHER WILL GIVE YOU.” (JN 15:16). WE ARE CHOSEN PEOPLE.

B) A HOLY NATION. THE KEY WORD IS ‘HOLY’; WE HAVE BEEN SET APART TO BELONG EXCLUSIVELY TO GOD. “BUT OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN. AND WE EAGERLY AWAIT A SAVIOUR FROM THERE, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,” (PHILIPPIANS 3:20). WE FOLLOW AND OBEY THE LORD OF HEAVEN. WE ARE A HOLY NATION.

C) A PEOPLE BELONGING TO GOD. AS CHRISTIANS, WE HAVE BEEN PURCHASED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS ON THE CROSS. “FOR YOU KNOW THAT IT WAS NOT WITH PERISHABLE THINGS SUCH AS SILVER OR GOLD THAT YOU WERE REDEEMED FROM THE EMPTY WAY OF LIFE HANDED DOWN TO YOU FROM YOUR ANCESTORS, BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH OR DEFECT.” (1 PET 1:18-19). AS CHRISTIANS, BEING A CITIZEN OF GOD’S NATION IS A WONDERFUL TRUTH AND A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. “...THAT YOU MAY DECLARE THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS WONDERFUL LIGHT.” (1 PET 2:9B).

*EACH CITIZEN OF HEAVEN IS A LIVING ADVERTISEMENT FOR GOD ON EARTH; A BEACON OF GOD'S WONDERFUL LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD. AS CITIZENS IN THE SAME NATION, WE NEED TO PRESENT THE WORLD A UNIFIED MESSAGE OF GOD'S LOVE, MERCY AND GRACE. WHEN WE DO THIS, WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH AND TO BRING GOD THE GLORY THAT HE DESERVES.*

*AS CHRISTIANS TODAY, IF WE THINK THAT LIVING IN HARMONY TOGETHER IS NOT IMPORTANT, THEN IT IS OPENING THE GATE TO THE ENEMY AND LETTING HIM IN UNOPPOSED. LIVING IN HARMONY TOGETHER IS ESSENTIAL TO WHO WE ARE AS CHRISTIANS. LOVING GOD AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER IN JESUS' NAME MUST BE OUR OVERALL AMBITION, ABOVE ALL OTHERS. THIS IS THE LOVE THAT CAN CHANGE OUR LIVES, OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR NATION. BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR US ON THE CROSS AT CALVARY:*

*• WE ARE CHILDREN IN HIS FAMILY. • WE ARE CLERICS IN HIS TEMPLE. • WE ARE CITIZENS IN HIS NATION. IT IS ALL BECAUSE OF JESUS. THIS SPIRITUAL UNITY IS EMPHASIZED VISUALLY AS WE SHARE COMMUNION TOGETHER. IT IS ONE TABLE, ONE MEAL, ONE BODY, ONE BREAD, ONE CUP, ONE SAVIOUR – JESUS CHRIST. BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS HAS DONE, WE CAN 'WALK IN HARMONY' TOGETHER.*