



Heartbeats along the way: The Deeply Loving Heart

"Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart." 1 Peter 1:22

If you ever wanted a concise sermon about God's calling and equipping the saints for kingdom work, you cannot do better than Peter's first letter to the new church dispersed throughout what is now Turkey. I strongly encourage you to read and think on it from these perspectives: the dangerous and exciting early years of the Church; the calling to us as the family of God known as Carlisle UMC; and Peter's command to love one another deeply from the heart.

It always fascinates me that when we follow God's recipe, how fresh and hot from the oven these words are to this day. Baked by faithful Christians, symbolically eaten together during Holy Communion, and freely shared with one another through trials, temptations, joys, sorrows, uncertainties - personal and collective. And there's always enough to go around with some to spare.

God deeply loves us. God sent Jesus to show how deeply. And I believe God implanted this deeply loving gene in our DNA so we can act as God does.

Don't you see? God isn't just leading us to a new place of worship. God is preparing us for greater works in His name when we go forth from the Spring Garden Campus. After all, it's not only the building; it's the commission to deeply love in the name of Christ!

"O God, Healer, Redeemer, Dearest Friend, As Jesus showed the disciples of the early church, guide us to have nothing but deeply loving hearts for every member of our church family. Gently move us to rejoicing together as we journey to the Sanctuary You are inspiring us to build. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

~ cl reynolds

1 Peter 1

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. For "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever." That word is the good news that was announced to you.