

**“Supernatural Love”**  
**1 Peter 1:22-2:3**

*Introduction:* Pg. \_\_\_\_

Who remembers the first time you received a box of Sweethearts candies?

“Be mine.” “Me & You” “True Love” “XO XO” & “Miss U Already”

These hearts have been around since 1902, but last year, tragedy struck Valentine’s Day, as the longtime time, Massachusetts based Necco candy maker (“New England Confectionery Company”) filed for bankruptcy, meaning “Sweethearts” boxes would not be on the shelves for Valentine’s Day 2019.

As if that wasn’t enough, the company who bought out Necco, moved all of the equipment from Massachusetts to Ohio, but the printing machine that stamped all of these messages of love proved unreliable, which meant most all of the hearts sold this year came out blank.

This outrageous reality hit our home this weekend as my three Valentine princesses opened their boxes to find a bunch of blank hearts!

True love speaks! True love communicates! Can I get an AMEN this morning?!

In an interesting Valentine’s Day Weekend twist, our journey through 1 Peter reinforces the assertion that true love speaks, but it takes it one step further. It will show us a consistent interplay (the back and forth, symbiotic relationship) between our love and God’s word. It calls us to...

**The Point: Extend supernatural love in light of God’s word.**

As we read 1 Peter 1:22-2:3, we will see how our love is built on God’s word.

- The word gave us life, and brought us into a life of love.
- The word is imperishable; our love should be imperishable.
- We grow by the word, and we you grow our love will... grow as well.

**Read 1 Peter 1:22-2:3**

I want to focus on 3 characteristics of supernatural love we see in these verses.

**I. Deep Love (1:22).**

Peter begins by saying, “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth...” This is another way of speaking of how they’ve been born again.

- They’ve been made new through the purifying work of God’s Spirit. How?
- By their obedience to the truth.
  - The word “obedience” here does not refer to walking in God’s instructions after choosing to follow Jesus.
  - He’s talking about obeying the call of the gospel to put their faith in Christ. The context is clear, especially what follows in verse 23... “since you have been born again.”
  - [[If you are new to Christianity, God is actually calling you to trust him, to step into his love. It’s an offer every person ultimately answers with a “Yes” or a “No.”]]
  - This obedience is to “the truth.” Jesus made audacious and very logical claims. I am the way, THE TRUTH, and the life. No one . . . That means there are not many “ways to construe reality, but [only] one that corresponds to the way things really are.” (Green)
- Here’s the logic: God brought you into this new life by the word of truth. This new life creates a new family and new power to love each other with God’s love.

Peter provides two keys words that highlight the kind of deep love God wants for us: Sincere and Earnest

**SINCERE**

- A “sincere brotherly love” means there’s no show. There’s no hypocrisy.
- An ancient times, they used the word “sincere” to talk about a piece of pottery held up in the sunlight without cracks or impurity, which is why translators add the word “pure” at the end of verse 22.
- Sincere love is not tainted with ulterior motives!

- This is the New England mindset. You're being nice because you want something from me.
- But God's love isn't looking to GET. The essence of love is GIVING!

T: Deep love is sincere, and deep love is...

#### EARNEST

- The word "earnestly" refers to a love that is fervent, a love that goes all out. It reaches to the furthest extent.
- This specific word was used only two other times in the NT, once to describe Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane just hours before he would suffer excruciating physical, emotional, and spiritual pain, dying in our place on a Roman cross. In those moments, Jesus agonized in prayer, expressing words from the depths of his soul.
- Peter says, "That's the kind of love you should extend to one another." There's an urgency, even a desperation to it. [In other words, this is such a priority, that I would do without other things, set them aside, so I could have this!]
- This is not love when it's convenient and comfortable. This is not a 65% investment. This is all in. Completely invested!

Look around... God is calling us to intensify our love! Paul puts it like this in 1 Thessalonians...

**"and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all..." (1 Thess. 3:12)**

**"Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another . . . But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more." (1 Thess. 4:9-10)**

Who is God calling you to love more and more?

- It may be someone you have a great relationship with right now.
- It also may be someone you are tempted to love (let's keep it real today) less and less.

"But Pastor Tanner, You don't know what they said, what they did, how they treated me!"

You're right, I don't. But I do know that "less and less" is not God's voice. That's your voice or the voice of our enemy.

Hang around anyone long enough, I promise they WILL let you down. The bigger question is: how will you respond when they do? With a less and less OR a MORE & MORE kind of love!

T: Oh, God, bring some reconciliation in the house today! Supernatural love, God's love flowing through us, is a DEEP love. #2. It is also an...

## II. Undying Love (1:23-25)

It's really fascinating what Peter is doing. He just told us to love one another earnestly from the heart. Now, he's going to tell us why, but he doesn't talk about God's love (like we'd expect). Instead, he talks about God's word.

### Read 23-25

What's the connection between God's word and our love? Let's look first at what Peter says about the word.

They have been born again through the "living and abiding word of God." This is how it works... The word is like a seed planted in our hearts. When it takes root, it pops into new life (because it's "living"), and this life is unending (because it's "abiding"). It does not fade or die. That's why Peter calls it an imperishable seed.

This is amazing! When the news of Jesus is announced, it carries a power beyond the words of the person sharing it. It pulls people in to say: "Wow. That's true. That's my story. I need the LIFE Jesus died to give me. I need to receive God's love!"

This is why Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

This carries two huge implications... 1) When you share the story of Jesus, you can have COMPLETE CONFIDENCE because the power is in the truthfulness of the story, not your ability to communicate it. 2) When you hear the story of Jesus, and you feel that tug in your heart, that's God's word coming alive in you. Receive it and step into the life of Christ.

Peter then quotes Isaiah 40 to amplify his point.

- Our lives are very transient: here one minute and gone the next.
- The glory we chase after (success, money, fame, achievement, comfort, \_\_\_\_\_) is also fleeting.
- Both are like grass that withers in the heat of summer or like a flower that falls to the ground after a few weeks of beauty.

- But God's word does not wither, it does not fall to the ground, it is not transient, fleeting or ephemeral. Whatever God says remains forever. It will stand the test of time!

And Peter specifically points to Isaiah 40, because Isaiah 40 announced good news of hope to the people of Israel who were suffering in exile. There were so many points of comparison between their experience and these Christians suffering under Roman rule and persecution. God is faithful. He will restore! A better day is coming!

You say: "Ok, that's great. After all, if God said something, we'd expect it to hold up under scrutiny and through massive amounts of skepticism and opposition. BUT TANNER, "What's love got to do with it?" :)"

Say "Everything!"

Peter talks about how God's word never dies because this is what our love should look like! If you've been born through a word that will endure forever, that's what your relationships should look like too.

God's supernatural love goes the distance!

- This is the kind of love we long for. So many times, earthly love/natural love, taps out way too early!!
- This is why wedding vows still matter... "Do you (wonderful, almost perfect woman), take this broken, imperfect man to have and to hold from this day forward for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to death do you part?" "I do."
- But wait... this love is not marital love. It's love in God's family. It's the people sitting beside you today and in your Group throughout the week.

T: God is calling us to a supernatural love. A love that is deep, undying, and . . .

### III. Growing love (2:1-3).

Supernatural love keeps getting better and better with time.

Because our love should be earnest and undying, we must do away with anything that would dampen the fullness of our love for one another. That's what he's getting at in verse 1.

#### Read 2:1-3

- "The word "rid yourselves" (*apotithēmi*) is often used for putting off sin or [anything that] hinders Christian growth (Rom 13:12; Eph 4:22, 25; Col 3:8; Heb 12:1; Jas 1:21)." (Schreiner)
- Peter is saying, anything that can disrupt or ruin your relationships, take them off like filthy garments and get them out of your life!

He then lists five relational sins we need to put six feet deep.

- All Malice: Malice involves harboring ill-will toward someone. We not only despise their success; we actually want them to suffer to some degree.
- All Deceit: happens when we are less than truthful to put the other person in a bad position.
- All Hypocrisy: is the opposite of sincere love. We say one thing to a person, but gladly do another.
- All Envy: exposes our inclination to want to be elevated above others. We want what they've got.
- All Slander: spreads false information or false impressions of others in the hopes that people will not look on them in a favorable light.

I was talking to a new friend this week who shared how these characteristics can dominate the business world as people are driven, not by love, but by greed and the Almighty Dollar. But the temptation is just as real to elevate ourselves in the sight of others, for selfish motives create a sense of competition rather togetherness!

It's only as we put off malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander and PUT ON LOVE, that we will experience harmony and flourishing in our relationships.

[[Think about the person you're currently experiencing friction with. Then consider what 1 Corinthians 13 says about love: love is patient and kind, it does not envy or boast... It does not insist on its own way. It rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.]]

Let me encourage you: Get proximate. Take a step toward deeper community. This is why we have Groups and Teams at Redemption Hill. They provide a place for us to fulfill these instructions to love one another with a deep, undying, and growing love!

Peter wraps up this section by showing us how we grow spiritually and in our love for one another.

- He says it happens as we “long for our spiritual milk.”
- There is little doubt, based on the context of what he’s just shared, that Peter is referring to the word of the Lord and the truth of the gospel.
- Verses 2-3 help us see two aspects of our relationship to God and his words to us. Desire & Delight.

How do you approach the message of the gospel and the truth of God’s words?

#### Do you possess a consistent desire? (2:2) - 140

- He says we should take in truth “like newborn infants.” He is not saying they are new believers or infants in their maturity, but encouraging them to crave God’s words, to have an intense desire for God, just like a baby cries out for food.
- Our parents of newborns can attest, that cry will get you out of your seat in a hurry. That cry can sound like: “Give me food or give me another family!”
- There is a deep desire to receive God’s words so that it takes effect in our lives. Listen: knowledge of the Bible does not equal maturity. Applied knowledge of the Bible equals maturity.
- So we read it. Study it. Listen to it. Meditate on it. Discuss it with friends. Share it. Memorize it.
- But we DO IT ALL, so that we will LIVE IT!

#### Do you possess a consistent delight? (2:3) - 175

- Peter ends by saying: If you have experienced how GOOD God is, you should naturally desire more of him!
- It’s almost certain he is echoing Psalm 34:8 in verse 3: **“Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good!” (Psalm 34:8)**
- God’s goodness refers to the pleasing effect of his worth in our lives.
- God wants us to be MOVED by him. Our affections to be stirred. Our hearts to leap in his presence. He expects that we’ll get excited about what we’re learning about him. This book, truly received, will put a smile on your face, joy in your heart, and make you want to SING!
- The experience of goodness deposits a desire for more of that goodness, and there is always more with God.

*Conclusion:* Freestyle... Who’s the one God is calling you to love with supernatural love?