

Trust in God

1 Peter 1:17-23

Last Sunday Gregg apologized for not changing the cloth on the communion table and cross. However, when Trudy and I looked up the liturgical colors we discovered that the cloth will be white until Pentecost Sunday on June 4th. The white reminds us of light, innocence, purity, triumph, glory and the joy of the resurrection! This means we get to celebrate Easter, not just one day or one Sunday, but seven Sundays! We get seven whole Sundays to learn how precious Jesus' resurrection is to the life of people of faith – to our lives. It reminds us of the song by Avery and Marsh, *Every Morning is Easter Morning*. For those who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, and his sacrifice of love – everyday really is Easter!

First Peter was written to people like us, people who wanted to understand Christ's work to save and our experience of God's love in that work. This passage explores the fruit that Christ's work bears in our lives—how we are shaped into persons who bear an obedient love for one another and how Christ's ransom of our souls opens within us a trust of God, an obedience to the truth, and a love for one another. Peter moves us from our birth into hope through Christ's resurrection, to the love for Christ that we find in this new birth, to the holiness that this hope and love that has formed within us. Christ ransoms us from ourselves—from our captivity to our own broken wills. Christ paid the concrete price of the gift of himself to free us from our bondage, but he bought for this price a reformation of our wills, a change of our hearts. We have come to this love "through the living and

enduring word of God" (v. 23). Indeed, it is God's imperishable word that brings new life in Christ to birth within us. **Stephen Edmondson**

This reminds us in the world of gardening, there are seeds that are perishable, and there are seeds that are imperishable. Anyone who has ever shaken the morning glory seeds off the dried-up plant in the fall knows this wonderful fact. The seeds fall like rain into the dirt below, and the next magnificent season of "morning glory" is almost surely guaranteed. This is not so with the six-packs of hothouse hybrids, planted one spring and gone forever at the first freeze.

Writing to a community of people who were keenly aware of the transient nature of their faith, the author of 1 Peter laid some groundwork for Christian longevity and future generations. Whether that community was being harassed openly for their belief, or just marginalized and made to feel self-conscious, the author coaxed confidence from new believers: "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ" (v. 18). Though silver and gold are rarely seen as perishable, the point is: Jesus' death and resurrection will have lasting power like nothing else we know. Our being born anew is irrevocably attached to the "imperishable seed" which is the "living and enduring word of God" (v. 23).

While we cannot possibly know what it might be like to live out our faith in a climate of constant persecution, we, North Americans are certainly familiar with the perishable. Even with a growing awareness of all things green, the "throwaway" nature of life is, well, natural. When our computers fail, they are thrown out, not fixed. When our cell phones die, they are replaced with the newer model. When the toaster breaks, China will provide us with another in the time it takes to walk out to the alley and deposit it in

the trash bin. Extended to the arena of health, the human body has "throwaway" parts as well. New eyes, new hips, new hearts can be expected when the first fail. The thought that we might die with all original body parts intact is a fleeting one. So we North Americans understand perishable.

"Imperishable" may be as foreign to us as it was to an ancient. For the new Christian living in exile in the first century, to take on belief in Christ would mean shaking off some real fears about isolation. Would faith in Jesus enhance an already-tentative existence in the world? Would it just open the way for more heartache and despair? What would it mean to be at the start of such a movement? Cradle Christians can hardly picture the way without the patriarch or matriarch of the church family out front taking the first set of blows for the cause.

Our world is looking for real trust in God, especially the population of young adults left adrift by boomer parents who wanted their children to "make up their own mind about faith." They come to faith communities all on their own, with no background, no family allegiance, no recollection of Sunday school or Vacation Bible school activities. They have no baptismal certificate but are hungry for knowledge about why one would even consider the sacraments. Never satisfied with a simplistic faith, they want to anchor their lives in the imperishable and enduring word of God, when all around them the perishable runs the show. They and we seek a genuine, trusting relationship with God.

Across all of time, God's people search for meaning and purpose in life, and the author of this epistle works at shedding some light on that quest. The life of faith that Christ facilitates is a life of hope in God that is reliable, trustworthy, and worth the risks. This life enables one to love from the heart. In our society love might come from eHarmony—maybe. Love might be

fostered over the Internet, where backing out is always an option and anonymity reigns supreme. Love might be briefly found, with no real expectation of a lifelong commitment. Love might be expressed in the Boys and Girls Club, but only as a résumé item. I have an acquaintance that is 72 years old, has been married three times, and is still looking for love on eHarmony. A few months back he said he had found her, and the wedding was set for May. But, alas, a few weeks back she emailed him to back out of the relationship! Love from the heart? Love that would be imperishable? This kind of love is almost a foreign concept! **Joy Douglas Strome**

Peter tells us to trust in God and God's imperishable words – words passed from eye-witnesses of the resurrection to our fathers and mothers in the faith to faithful witnesses who passed it one to us. Wherever this news traveled, communities began to gather around the story. Those who heard and believed the good news about Jesus were changed in profound ways. Whatever they had been before, they were so different that the letter writer said they had been "born anew" (v. 23); learning to trust God – the one who is our Father. **Barbara K. Lundblad**

There are perishable seeds and imperishable seeds. What God did for us through Jesus is the imperishable seed. This is the seed through which God's love presents itself to the world. Inasmuch as the gospel reveals Jesus to us, Jesus reveals God's eternal love and the eternity of God's love is the basis for our trust in God. The eternal love of God is manifest in Christ, who is manifest through God's word, and this leads us to trust, obedience, and love. **Stephen Edmondson**