



LESSON SIX

The Full Salvation of the Triune God and Its Issues

Scripture Reading:

1 Peter 1:13-25

- 1:13** Therefore girding up the loins of your mind and being sober, set your hope perfectly on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 1:14** As children of obedience, do not be fashioned according to the former lusts in your ignorance;
- 1:15** But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1:16** Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- 1:17** And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
- 1:18** Knowing that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers,
- 1:19** But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ;
- 1:20** Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake,
- 1:21** Who through Him believe into God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.
- 1:22** Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently,
- 1:23** Having been regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God.
- 1:24** For "all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen off,
- 1:25** But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which has been announced to you as the gospel.

1 Peter 2:1-3

- 2:1** Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings,
- 2:2** As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,
- 2:3** If you have tasted that the Lord is good.

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. What does it mean to have our soul purified?
2. How do we purify our souls?
3. Give examples of how to take the Word of God as reality.

Section 2:

1. How do we practically 'gird up our loins'?
2. What does it mean to have unfeigned brotherly love and practically how can we have this kind of love toward one another?
3. What is the seed spoken of in 1 Peter 1:23? How is this seed conveyed to us?

Section 3:

1. Give a summary for the chapter 1 of 1 Peter.
2. What is the relationship among the five negative things in 1 Peter 2:1?
3. What is the 'guileless milk of the word' for?

Section 4:

1. Explain how 1 Peter 2:1 and 2 are written according to Peter's spiritual experiences.
2. What is the concept of 'growth' among most people, and what is the proper understanding according to the New Testament?

THE PURIFICATION OF OUR SOULS

In this message we shall consider 1:22-25. Verse 22 says, “Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from the heart fervently.” According to his habit in writing, Peter in this verse puts a number of things together. First he says, “Having purified your souls.” We cannot find such an expression any place else in the New Testament. We may read about purifying our heart, but not about purifying our soul.

The purification of our souls is the Spirit’s sanctification of our disposition that we may live a holy life in God’s holy nature (vv. 15-16). It is deeper than the purification of our sins (Heb. 1:3) and the cleansing of sin (1 John 1:7). The latter is the purification of our outward doing; the former, the purification of our inward being—the soul. This is like the washing in the word in Ephesians 5:26.

In verse 22 Peter uses the perfect tense when he speaks of having purified our souls. But when did this happen? In verses 1 through 21 there is no mention of such a thing. But suddenly, in verse 22, Peter says, “Having purified your souls.” But in the foregoing twenty-one verses he has not said anything concerning this purification.

Our soul is composed of mind, emotion, and will, which are also parts of our heart. To have our soul purified is to have our mind, emotion, and will, the parts of our heart, purified from any kind of defilement and contamination. (Acts 15:9; James 4:8). This actually means to have our mind, emotion, and will delivered from all things other than God, and fixed on God as the sole object and unique goal. This kind of purification is accomplished by our obedience to the truth, which is the content and reality of our faith. When we obey the truth, the content and reality of our faith in Christ, our entire soul is concentrated on God and in this way is purified from all things other than God. This is to save our souls from all filthiness by receiving the implanted word (James 1:21), which is the sanctifying truth (John 17:17).

According to Peter’s word in verse 22, we purify our souls by obedience to the truth. Here we have the three matters of the purification of the soul, obedience, and truth. We should not take any of

these things for granted. Instead, we should ask what truth is here and also what it means to have obedience to the truth. Furthermore, Peter says that this purification of our souls by obedience to the truth is unto unfeigned brotherly love. Here Peter speaks not merely of love, and not only of brotherly love, but of unfeigned brotherly love. Therefore, in this one verse Peter covers the purification of our souls, obedience to the truth, and unfeigned brotherly love. Then he goes on to urge us to love one another from the heart fervently. It is characteristic of Peter’s writings to put so many points together in one verse.

According to the proper understanding of language, the subject of “having purified your souls” is “you.” This means that Peter is telling the believers that they have purified their souls. Therefore, it is possible to translate the first part of verse 22 this way: “You, having purified your souls.”

The way we purify our souls is by our obedience to the truth. This may not be a profound matter like the foreknowledge of God, but it is very practical. Compared to the great matters on the divine side, it is quite small. Nevertheless, it is very important in our Christian life. We need to ask ourselves if in our Christian life we have experienced the purifying of our souls by obedience to the truth.

TOUCHING REALITY IN THE WORD

In order to understand what it means to purify our souls by obedience to the truth, we must be clear concerning the meaning of truth in this verse. Truth here is the sanctifying truth, which is God’s word of reality (John 17:17). Truth in this verse does not mean doctrine. Truth is the reality contained in God’s word and conveyed by it. For example, John 3:16 says, “God so loved the world.” This is the divine word. This word, however, should not merely be a doctrine to us, as it is with so many readers of John 3:16. To read this verse only in a doctrinal way is to have a natural understanding. This natural understanding is devilish, for the Devil is behind our natural understanding. If our natural understanding occupies us in full, it becomes devilish. If we are to have more than a natural understanding of John 3:16, we need to touch the reality contained in this short word and conveyed by it. When we read, “God so loved the world,” we need to ask ourselves if we have experienced this love. We should say, “God so loved the

world. Does this ‘world’ include me? Does this word mean that God so loved me?” Anyone who reads John 3:16 in this way will get saved. Such a one would say, “O God, how I thank You that the world includes me. For You to love the world means that You love me.” This is to take John 3:16 as truth, as reality, and not merely as a doctrine.

First Timothy 3:15 says that the church is the house of the living God. This verse contains doctrine, but to us it should not be merely a doctrine. Rather, Paul’s word about the church being the house of the living God should be a truth, a reality. We need to ask, “Is the church in my locality the house of the living God?” If we read the verse in this way, we shall contact reality, truth. The truth is the solid content, the reality, contained in the word of God and conveyed by it to us.

First Peter is addressed to scattered Jewish believers who had been in Judaism before they were saved. They had much knowledge of the types in the Old Testament. When they heard the gospel and the teaching of the apostles, they contacted reality. Through the preaching of the gospel and the apostles’ teaching, the truth, the reality, in the word of God was conveyed to those Jews. As a result, they heard the reality contained in the word of God. This is the truth.

We should not only receive doctrine from God’s word—we should touch reality. The gospel and the teaching of the apostles contain realities, and these realities had been conveyed to the Jewish believers. The Jewish believers to whom Peter was writing in his first Epistle had received the truth, the reality, from the gospel and from the teaching of the apostles.

GIRDING UP OUR MIND AND PURIFYING OUR SOUL

However, after the believers had received this truth, this reality, the Judaizers came to them and reminded them of their background in the Jewish religion. The talk of the Judaizers was distracting and disturbing and caused the mind of the Jewish believers to wander away from the truth. Perhaps one of the Jewish believers said to his wife, “Peter’s preaching is real, isn’t it? Why, then, does it contradict so many things we have heard from our parents? It even seems that some of Peter’s teachings are contrary to those of Moses. We really have a problem. Can you believe that our fathers taught us something wrong? Why does Peter teach us things that are different from

what we heard in the past?” This illustrates what was the background when Peter wrote this Epistle.

In verse 13 Peter says, “Wherefore, girding up the loins of your mind, being sober, set your hope completely on the grace being brought to you at the unveiling of Jesus Christ.” The word “wherefore” at the beginning of this verse is based upon all the divine truths contained in verses 1 through 12. The matter of our being chosen according to the foreknowledge of God is not merely a doctrine; it is a truth, a reality. It is also a reality that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has regenerated us unto a living hope. Furthermore, it is a truth that this living hope is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, kept for us in the heavens. In these twelve verses we have a great deal of truth, of reality.

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With all this truth as the basis (*verses 1-12*), Peter charges us to gird up the loins of our mind and to be sober. We should not allow our mind to wander, and we should not be drunken or drugged. To be sober is to be de-drugged, to wake up from a stupor. Therefore, in verse 13 Peter is telling the Jewish believers to forget their religious background, to be sober, and to no longer wander in their mind.

To gird up our mind is actually to purify our soul. Whenever our mind is wandering, our soul is impure. Dissenting thoughts cause our mind to wander. These dissenting thoughts may enter our mind like fiery darts. When our mind begins to wander, our soul becomes unclean. If this is our situation, we need to purify our soul. But how can we purify our soul? We purify our soul by girding up our mind and by setting it on one thing, not allowing it to wander.

The fiery darts of dissenting thoughts not only disturb our mind, but they pollute our emotion and our will. As a result, we are not pure in the Lord and before the Lord. This will make it difficult for us to praise the Lord in a genuine way.

This impure emotion can be compared to that of a woman who loves more than one man. She loves her husband, but she also loves someone else. This is fornication. This is a kind of pollution.

This pollution can also damage our will. It becomes difficult for us to make decisions, for we

have two goals. Therefore, our entire soul becomes impure. Our mind is wandering, our emotion is divided, and our will is damaged. In such a case, we need the purification of our soul.

God will not purify our soul for us. We need to do this ourselves by our obedience to the truth we have heard and received. Such an obedience to the truth becomes the means by which we purify our souls. Therefore, in verse 22 Peter tells the Jewish believers that they have purified their souls by obedience to the truth. This truth is conveyed in God's sanctifying word.

UNTO UNFEIGNED BROTHERLY LOVE

In verse 22 Peter says that we purify our souls by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love. Since the purification of our souls concentrates our entire being on God that we may love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Mark 12:30), it results in unfeigned brotherly love. We love from the heart fervently all those whom God loves. First, God's regeneration issues in a holy life. Then His sanctification (purification) results in brotherly love.

What does the word "unfeigned" mean? It means not to pretend or not to be hypocritical. But in particular it means not to put on a mask. To feign something is to put on a mask to disguise how we really feel. It is to pretend to be something that we are not. Unfeigned brotherly love is brotherly love that is genuine, without pretense; it is brotherly love without any kind of mask. In verse 22 the adjective "unfeigned" is very important. It indicates that through the purification of our soul, all the masks have been taken away.

Many times the saints may put on masks in the church life. They may love one another, but it is a love with a mask. The reason for this feigned love is that these saints have not purified their souls. They have not girded up the loins of their mind, concentrated their emotion, and made a strong decision with their will concerning the recovery. Therefore, everything they do is with a mask. They may realize that as long as they are in the church life they need to behave in a loving way. But inwardly they are doubting, and their souls, including the mind, the emotion, and the will, have been polluted. These saints need to purify their souls by obeying the truth.

When we have purified our souls by our obedience to the truth, we can love one another from the heart fervently. In verse 22 we have both the purifying of the soul and love from the heart.

To love from the heart is to have a love that comes not only from the parts of the soul but also from the conscience. Our conscience testifies that we love the brothers with an unfeigned love. When our conscience has this kind of testimony, we love from the heart. But if our conscience does not confirm our love or testify concerning it, then our love is merely from the soul. It is not a love from the heart, because the conscience is not part of the soul, but is part of the heart.

REGENERATED THROUGH THE LIVING AND ABIDING WORD OF GOD

The main part of the sentence in verses 22 and 23 is, "Love one another from the heart fervently." "Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love" is a clause that modifies the subject (you understood) of "Love one another from the heart fervently." Then verse 23 continues with another modifying clause, "Having been regenerated, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God." This verse modifies verse 22. Having been regenerated, we have purified our souls unto brotherly love. Regeneration with the divine life is the base, the ground, for the purification, sanctification, of our souls unto unfeigned love. This section of the Word both begins and ends with regeneration, which results in a holy life toward God and a brotherly love toward the saints.

Verse 23 indicates that we have been regenerated through the living and abiding word of God. We have not been regenerated of corruptible seed. A seed is a container of life. The word of God as the incorruptible seed contains God's life. Hence, it is living and abiding. Through this word we have been regenerated. It is God's living and abiding word of life that conveys God's life into our spirit for our regeneration.

We may paraphrase Peter's writing this way: "Brothers and sisters, don't you know that we have all been regenerated? We have been regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible seed. This incorruptible seed is in the living and abiding word of God. Therefore, we have been regenerated of incorruptible seed through the living and abiding word of God. The word of God is not actually the seed itself; rather, it is the container of the seed. For this reason, the seed comes through the word. You need to realize that you have been regenerated of incorruptible seed which is conveyed to us in the living word of God."

If the seed is not the word of God itself, then what is it? The seed is the eternal life of God. God's eternal life is a seed containing divine genes. We all have been regenerated of this organic, divine seed through the divine word.

Since we have been regenerated in this way, we need to care for the seed within us, and we should not care for any dissenting talk from those who oppose the Lord's recovery. Instead of listening to the words of dissenting ones, we need to pay attention to the seed. We should check everything with the seed in us.

Furthermore, with this seed within us as the basis, this seed received through regeneration, we need to purify our soul. Do not listen to the dissenting talk of religionists. Instead, pay attention to the inward seed. Gird up your mind, concentrate your emotion, and strengthen your will. Then make a strong decision for the Lord's recovery. This is what it means to purify our soul. If you purify your soul in this way, the result will be unfeigned brotherly love.

In verses 24 and 25 Peter goes on to say, "Because all flesh is as grass, and all its glory as the flower of grass. The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen off, but the word of the Lord abides forever. And this is the word which is preached as the gospel to you." These verses are not nearly as deep as verses 22 and 23, and they are much easier to understand. The flesh in verse 24 refers to fallen man. All the fallen human race is as withering grass, and its glory as the falling flower of grass. The believers were like that, but the living and abiding word of the Lord, with the seed sown into them through regeneration, has changed their nature and makes them living and abiding forever.

The word in verse 23 is *logos*, referring to the constant word. The word here is *rhema* (twice), referring to the instant word. When the *logos* is spoken to us, it becomes *rhema*.

In verse 25 it is the word of the Lord that abides forever. "Lord" refers to God in verse 23. This indicates that the Lord Jesus is God.

In verse 25 Peter speaks of "the word which is preached as the gospel to you." The word preached by the apostles is the gospel that regenerates the believers.

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A PICTURE OF THE CHURCH LIFE

First Peter chapter one is a complete section of this book. This section clearly reveals that the Triune God operates upon His chosen people to carry out His economy and to bring them into the full participation of Himself so that they may enjoy Him as grace. When God's chosen people enjoy the Triune God as grace, they have peace. Peace, therefore, is the result of the enjoyment of grace. The first point covered in chapter one is the operation of the Triune God upon His elect to bring them into the enjoyment of Himself as grace so that they may have peace.

Chapter one goes on to reveal that the operation of the Triune God produces full salvation. First we have God's operation for His economy, and this operation brings forth God's full salvation. God's full salvation includes the Father's regeneration, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's sanctification. This is the full salvation carried out by the operation of the Triune God.

The full salvation of the Triune God issues, results, in two matters: a holy manner of life for the expression of God, and unfeigned brotherly love toward all the saints. These two matters, a holy manner of life and unfeigned brotherly love, are a picture of the genuine church life. On the one hand, in the real church life we see the expression of God; on the other hand, in such a church life there is unfeigned love for one another. Therefore, holiness and love are the result of the full salvation carried out by the operation of the Triune God upon His elect. This is a clear and complete summary of chapter one.

PUTTING AWAY FIVE NEGATIVE THINGS

In 2:1 Peter goes on to say, "Therefore, putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings." This verse begins with "therefore." This indicates that the exhortation in 2:1-10 is based upon what is unveiled in chapter one. Three main things accomplished in the believers by the Triune God are emphasized in chapter one: the Father's regeneration (vv. 3, 23), the Son's redemption (vv. 2, 18-19), and the Spirit's sanctification (v. 2) to make the believers a holy people, living a holy life (vv. 15-16). Based upon this, Peter charges the believers to grow in life (2:2) for the building up of a spiritual house (2:5).

Although chapter one is complete in itself, Peter, according to his experiences, still has more to say. Therefore, with chapter one as his basis, he proceeds to give the charge found in chapter two. He begins by telling the saints to put away all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envyings, and evil speakings. Of the hundreds of sinful things, Peter selects five: malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking. I would ask you to spend some time to consider what these are.

According to the sequence of these five matters, malice is the root, the source, and evil speaking is the expression. We may have malice as a root within us. Then there will eventually be evil speaking as the expression of this malice. The development from malice to evil speaking includes guile, hypocrisies, and envyings, three downward steps from malice toward evil speaking. If we have guile, we shall also have hypocrisies; and if hypocrisies, then envyings as well. Hence, the root is malice, the development includes guile, hypocrisy, and envy, and the final expression is evil speaking.

Not even a verse such as 2:1 should be read in a careless way. We should not take any verse for granted or neglect to study it seriously. Rather, we should study every verse with the goal and expectation of getting into the depths of it. Actually, the depths of the Word are the reality of the Word. This reality is the truth. If we consider verse 1 carefully, we shall see the root, the development, and the expression. In the light of this verse we see that all malice needs to be uprooted.

LONGING FOR THE GULELESS MILK OF THE WORD

Verse 2 says, "As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word, that by it you may grow unto salvation." Born through regeneration (1:3, 23), the believers become babes who can grow in life unto further salvation, and that for God's building, by being nourished with the spiritual milk.

"Guileless" in verse 2 does not mean unadulterated, in contrast to less pure teachings; instead, it is guileless in contrast to the guile in verse 1. Guileless milk is milk without false purpose, without any other goal but to nourish the soul.

The Greek word rendered "of the word" is *logikos*. This word, in Romans 12:1 translated reasonable, is derived from the noun *logos*—the word; hence, of the word; having the sense of

pertaining to the mind (in contrast to the body), to the rational faculties; hence, rational, logical, reasonable. The milk of the word is not milk for the body, but is milk for the soul, the inner being. It is conveyed in the word of God to nourish our inner man through the understanding of our rational mind, and it is assimilated by our mental faculties.

As far as grammar is concerned, verse 1 is a modifier of the subject of verse 2. As we have pointed out, "guileless" in verse 2 is in contrast to "guile" in verse 1. The Recovery Version may be unique in using "guileless milk" in the translation of verse 2. Other versions have "pure milk" or "sincere milk." It may be that Peter intended guileless to include the meaning of pure and sincere. However, the purpose of Peter's writing here is to show a contrast between guilelessness and the guile that proceeds out of malice.

What can swallow up, or eliminate, our guile? The nourishment contained in the guileless milk of the word is an antibiotic for guile. In the Word of God there is a nourishment that is milk for our inner being. Just as our physical body is nourished with milk, so our inner being, our soul, needs to be nourished with the guileless milk of the word. This milk contains an element that can eliminate our guile. Therefore, the milk of the word is guileless milk.

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In 2:1 and 2, Peter indicates that, as newborn babes, we need to practice putting away all guile, and we also need to desire the guileless milk of the word. The purpose of putting away the evil root of malice is that we may long for, desire, the milk of the word. I believe that Peter wrote this not according to doctrine, but according to his spiritual experiences. If we do not have adequate experience, we shall not be able to understand what Peter is saying.

If you are full of malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking, you will not have any appetite for the Word. You will not be hungry or thirsty for the Word of God. You will not have the longing, the desire, to drink the pure milk of the Word. If you want to hunger and thirst after God's word, that is, if you want to desire the drinking of the milk in the word, you need to hate your malice and abstain from speaking evil things about others.

Suppose for quite a long period of time, perhaps more than a year, a particular brother has been

filled with malice. Certain brothers, especially the elders, he does not like. Because he is full of malice and also full of guile, hypocrisies, and envyings, spontaneously he begins to speak negatively about others. He may speak evil concerning both brothers and sisters, both older ones and younger ones. This evil speaking has its source in the malice within him. To be sure, a brother in that condition will not have any appetite for the Word. From experience I know that he would neither hunger nor thirst for the nourishment in the Word of God.

However, let us suppose that this particular brother receives the mercy of the Lord one day to realize his sinfulness. Realizing his need of Christ as the sin offering and the trespass offering, he repents, confesses his sins, and prays, "O Lord, forgive me. For a long time, I have been filled with malice, and I have spoken in an evil way about others. Lord, this shows me that sin is within me. Lord, even though I have been regenerated, I still have sin in me, for my fallen nature is sinful. O Lord, I need You as my sin offering. I take You and apply You as my sin offering. Oh, may the blood of the sin offering cleanse me, Lord! I realize that my evil speaking concerning the brothers and sisters is an offense, a trespass. Lord, I am full of trespasses! Forgive me and cleanse me. I take You not only as my sin offering, but also as my trespass offering. All day long, Lord, I want to enjoy You."

If the brother prays in this way, soon he will begin to have an appetite for the milk of the word. He will desire to come to the Word for nourishment. He will come to the Bible not to gain the knowledge of doctrine, but to drink nourishing milk. Spontaneously as he is reading the Bible, he will be drinking the guileless milk of God's word. Eventually, this milk will get into his inward being and function as an antibiotic to kill the germ of malice. Furthermore, this brother will begin to love all the saints. He may say, "Oh, I love the brothers and the sisters. I love all the elders. All the saints are good, and all of them are better than I am."

AN EXPERIENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

This understanding of verses 1 and 2 comes from experience. Peter wrote these verses according to his experience. It was also through experience that I have come to understand Peter's writing.... We should never read the Word in a natural way or in a careless manner. However, many Christians read the Bible in a natural way and take it for granted. But if we get into the depths

of the Word, we shall be enlightened. Then we shall have a lot of inner feeling and also have the utterance to speak what we see.

GENUINE GROWTH

According to Peter's word in verse 2, we should long for the guileless milk of the word so that by it we may grow. To grow is a matter of life and in life. We received the divine life through regeneration, and we need to grow in this life and with this life by being nourished with the milk conveyed in the Word of God.

We should desire the guileless milk of the word not only to have a spiritual antibiotic, but also to receive nourishment so that we may grow. The guileless milk of the word nourishes us, and by this nourishment we grow.

Many Christians think that to grow is to gain more knowledge. After a new believer has been baptized, others may encourage him to attend some kind of Bible class. He may be encouraged to get more knowledge. However, he may not hear a word that helps him to realize that through regeneration he has received the divine life and that now his need is to grow in life. He may only be helped to learn the stories in the Gospels and then the stories in the Old Testament. Gradually, he may pick up more Bible knowledge, and some may regard this as growth. This concept of growth, however, is altogether contrary to that in the New Testament. According to the New Testament, growth is the genuine increase in the measure of life. Knowledge does not help us to increase in the measure of life.

How do children grow? They grow by receiving nourishment. If an infant has a healthy diet and daily is given nourishing food, gradually he will grow. This growth is the increase from all the food taken into him. Eventually, as a full-grown adult, this one will be a composition of what he has eaten. Perhaps at birth he weighed only six pounds. But when he is full-grown, he may be a man weighing one hundred eighty pounds. He has experienced the real growth in life, the growth that comes from eating healthy food, digesting it, and assimilating it into his cells so that it becomes the very fibers of his being. This is an illustration of genuine growth in life.

We need to desire the guileless milk of the word so that by it we may have real growth in life. True growth is the increase of the measure of life. If we are growing in life, the life element within us will increase, and there will be an increase in our spiritual stature (Eph. 4:13).