

The Household of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 June 2016

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 0 0] 2 verse 10. 1 Peter 1, 3, 3. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth, for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly and with pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and mighty 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 remains forever.

And this word is the good news that is preached to you. So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all surrender. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, view yourselves like living stones, being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God and Jesus Christ.

For it stands in Scripture, behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious. Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

[1 : 3 0] So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has the wrongly chief cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were asked him to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. So please follow along with me. I hope you found your place in the Bible in 1 Peter 1-2, starting in verse 22 of chapter 1.

So Peter just talked about what it means, what it looks like to be in right relationship with God, and now in this passage, he addresses what it looks like to be in right relationship with one another in the church, and also with relation to the world.

[2 : 4 3] And as I was preparing this message and meditating on 1 Peter 1-2, I was reminded of what I read in a book entitled *The Rise of Christianity*, which is a historical, kind of sociological book written by Rodney Stark, who's a sociologist in Baylor University.

And he recounts the meteoric rise of early Christianity, how it went from being a fringe religion among Jews to becoming the majority religion of the Roman Empire, the most powerful empire in the world at the time, in just a few centuries.

It's not longer than the time the United States has been in existence. And he attributes this to two major factors. And the first is that while birth control, abortion, and infanticide, especially of female babies, were rampant throughout the Roman Empire, the Christians refused to follow these practices.

For that reason, because they kept their female babies and they didn't have abortions, they had a much more balanced gender distribution, which allowed them to reproduce at a much higher rate than the rest of the population.

So that's one thing, is that the Christians were growing because of their treatment of babies. And second, he attributes this to the way Christians behaved and lived in the midst of the two epidemics, plagues of 165 AD and 251 AD.

[4 : 2 7] These plagues were so widespread, they wiped out a third of the entire Roman Empire each time. So each time this plague happened. And so that's millions, several millions of people each time dying.

And at that time, understandably so in some ways, many people in the Roman Empire abandoned the cities and left their friends and families to spare themselves, to preserve themselves instead of being contaminated.

But during that time, Christians stayed in the cities and they cared for the sick. And the result of that, the reason was because they had a tighter social bond with one another than the rest of the Roman population.

And the result was that the Christians had a smaller casualty rate than the rest of the Roman Empire when these plagues hit.

So those are kind of the non-spiritual, kind of sociological reasons why this sociologist says the church grew. But as you think about that, we see that there's a very simple biblical explanation for all of this as well.

[5 : 35] And you see this in John 13, 35 where Jesus tells his disciples, By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

Really, what the Christians were doing was nothing creative or different. It was radical, but it was simply loving one another better than everybody else in the Roman Empire.

They loved the little ones in their midst. They loved the sick ones in their midst. And as they did so, they made Christianity look extremely attractive to the Washington world. And what accounts for how the early Christians loved one another this way?

And this passage in 1 Peter, chapter 1, verse 22, chapter 2, verse 10, gives us a glimpse into what truth creates this kind of community.

And he tells us the main idea here is that the household of God, the family of God, the household of God should love one another because they have been born of the living word through nursing with the life-giving milk and for rearing on the living stone.

[6 : 49] So, three things. So first is the reason why we should love one another. Second is the means by which we love one another. And the last is the goal of loving one another.

And the reason is that we have been born of the living word. And the means is the nursing with the life-giving milk. And the goal is the rearing or the building on the living stone.

It's Christ. So I'm going to follow that basic outline. First, let's look at verses 22 to 25 of chapter 1 where Peter tells us about the reason why we should love one another that we have been born of the living word of God.

He says in verses 22 to 23, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart since you have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God.

Note the structure of that first sentence. He says the very reason for which we have purified our souls by obedience to the truth is to love one another. He says having purified your souls by obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love.

[8 : 06] That's the reason for which we believe in the gospel the good news of Jesus Christ. The reason for which we obey the truth of the gospel is so that we may have sincere brotherly love.

So becoming a Christian then is not merely about assenting to a set of propositional truths. It's about loving God and one another. And when we believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ the good news that Christ the son of God became a man and then lived a perfect life and died to pay for our sins and rose again to give us new life.

When you believe this truth we do not simply get to know about God or hear about God but we come to love God and from that we come to love one another. So then the touchstone of our faith then is love.

It's an earnest love from a pure heart as it says in these verses. It's not theological aptitude or spiritual gifting even. It's love that we have for God and for one another.

And by love I don't mean this kind of flimsy weightless kind of empty kind of love that people talk about and it's better to call that kindness than love probably.

[9 : 16] And C.S. Lewis highlights this difference in his book *The Problem of Pain*. He says You guys follow that?

So the so-called kindness that says to people do whatever makes you happy and that's fine with me is no love at all rather it's a cold detached and uninvested kind of kindness.

Because with the people that we care the most about we risk rejection. We speak the truth. We get our hands dirty. We tell them we don't simply tell them do whatever you want to do whatever makes

you happy. We tell them this is what is good for you.

This is what will make you happy. We tell them the truth. We speak to them into their lives. That's what true love looks like because it's a love that's rooted in truth. As it says Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love.

Sincere brotherly love springs from obedience to the truth. They can't be divorced from one another. Moreover it's important for us to note that this is brotherly love and that includes sisterly love.

[10 : 43] It's the fact that we have to love one another as siblings as brothers and sisters in Christ. And I've mentioned this to you before but the reason for this is that we have been born again into the family of God.

Now that we have God as our father we are by nature of our relation to father related to one another as brothers and sisters. And sibling love is special in many ways but one way in particular because most other loves we choose and deliberately enter into them.

So you choose whom you're going to date or marry and you choose whom you're going to have friends with but you don't choose who you get to have as your brother or sister.

You have them as brother and sister simply because you have the same father and the same mother. And that's what it means to love one another as siblings is that it's not that we gather as a church because we have these similar interests or that we look like each other or that we have similar personalities and opinions.

But we gather as a church and we are united as a church as a family of God because of our relation to God the father. So that's why we bear with each other's quirks each other's unusual habits odd opinions maybe whatever it may be whatever people outside may say to us about each other we can still say this is my brother and this is my sister because we have the same father in God.

[12 : 13] And that's why it concerns me deeply when I hear people say things like and leave the church flippantly saying things like I don't like so and so personality or I don't fit in here at this church or I don't like the style of music here or my ethnicity or age group is not represented in this church because these are not the kind of reasons for which you'd leave your family because you wouldn't say oh I just don't get along with my brother so I'm going to stop being his brother I mean oh I don't really like the things that my sister does so I'm going to stop calling her my sister right a family sticks together just because it's a family right and that kind of added to betrays a lack of commitment to the body of Christ because that's not the kind of attitude that would stay in the middle of a plague in the city to care for the sick right we are the family of God we are part of the same household and families are meant to suffer together stick it out together and change together even as necessary right so that's how we are to love one another as a church because we have been born again into God's family and not only that we have to consider also what we have been born like consider by what we have been born again into God's family look at verse 23 with me of chapter 1 it says since you have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God it says we have been born again by the living and abiding word of God so here

Peter is contrasting two worlds he is contrasting the eternal spiritual realm with the temporal physical realm and he is comparing the heavenly realm that we are part of now we are citizens of with the earthly realm that we are still aliens in even though we are maybe citizens of an earthly nation and this is insightful and helpful for us because what we see around us the culture around us the politics the pop culture everything that we see may seem very real and tangible and permanent and alluring and enduring but all the desires of the flesh and all the accomplishments of our world that feel so compelling and irresistible is as it says in verses 24 to 25 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 remains forever now Peter is quoting here from Isaiah 40 verses 68 which God reassures his people of the hope that they have while they're in exile in the Babylonian exile so he's reminding them of their hope and future deliverance which fits exactly the context in which Peter's writing to the people who are in spiritual exile here on earth during the Roman Empire and if you consider that context actually it's even more remarkable what Peter is saying because Peter is writing at the height the zenith of the Roman Empire and the Roman Empire as you guys know is one of the most glorious and impressive civilizations in human history the empire was some of the largest sprawling throughout

Europe and Asia the emperor was the most powerful ruler on earth at the time Rome was the largest city in the world at the time their army was the most powerful military in the world at the time and all of this Peter says grass all its glory like the flower of grass the grass withers and the flower falls but the word of the Lord remains forever and I hope you really believe this because this is a very liberating and freeing truth if you really get this because then we don't have to live in captivity to the world because all the worldly fame and recognition what school you went to where you work how much you make what your position is how much you you know all of this is but grass all the worldly riches that we might think of or envy people of the car you drive the house you live in clothes you wear it's all grass right all the worldly accomplishments the patents you may win the laws you may pass the scientific breakthroughs architectural monuments all of that is grass and I'm not trying to say that these work this kind of work is not valuable because these work this kind of work can have eternal significance when they're done out of love for God and love for one another for his glory right but in and of themselves all of these human accomplishments all the things accomplished by the flesh is grass they will fade in memory and corrode with time but God's living word abides it says it will remain forever and since you have been born of this imperishable living and abiding word of God then Peter is saying this is his logic because you've been born of this abiding word of God the living word of God you should then live with eternity in view you should live with the long view long perspective on life and this reminds us of 1 Corinthians 13 13 where Apostle Paul says now faith, hope, and love abide these three but the greatest of these is love right so what they're saying basically is love is the stuff of eternity because because the love is the essence God is love and love is the essence of the new eternal nature that we have now it's people who are indwelt by the spirit of God and the love of God right so love is what's going to last therefore people as people who have been born again by the living and abiding word the eternal word we should live with love because love is what lasts what is eternal so that's the reason for which reason of why we have to love one another the house of God should love one another because they have been born of the living word and even though it could be hard to remember this truth as we live you could kind of think of it like let's say you were getting into you have a really really entrancing video game that you're getting into or a TV show or a movie and you're watching and if it's a really good game or movie or film or show you kind of get immersed in it right and you come to identify with the characters and you feel sad when the characters are sad you feel their joy you feel their empowerment as well as their enfeeblement you identify with that but at the end of that at the end of the show or at the end of the game you realize that was just temporary it was a virtual world it wasn't real and you resume your regular life right and it's not going to be unlike that at the end of time right that the life we live the human accomplishments the world of the flesh is going to seem that chimeral that fleeting in light of the reality of God's love and the eternity that we get to share with him now so if that's the reason why we must love one another

Peter also tells us the means by which we love one another it's in chapter 2 verses 1 to 3 and he says let me read it out loud so put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good so what is the means by which we love one another he says it involves putting away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander and if you notice what category these sins fall into all of these are vices that destroy relationships and community and that's why they're listed here because instead as Christians of relating to one another with malice ill will we have to have good will toward one another instead of deceiving one another we have to be honest and speak the truth with one another instead of being hypocritical we have to be sincere right just have sincere brotherly love for one another and instead of envying one another or slandering one another we have to seek one another's good and love one another and consider others better than ourselves right and this is not easy because we have a real spiritual enemy and Satan is actively seeking to destroy us to destroy the community by inciting precisely these things malice deceit hypocrisy envy and slander and we as a church have to stake our ground our claim on the ground and say refuse to yield and repent each time we fail in this regard repent and ask forgiveness of one another and Peter goes on in verse 2 like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good now he's continuing the metaphor of the birth of the new birth of Christians here so since we have been born again now as newborn infants we should crave pure spiritual milk and there's a double word play here going on that's not apparent in the English necessarily but because the word pure literally means deceitless and now if you remember he had just told us to put away all

deceit and now he says to crave long for deceitless milk right and then Peter also tells us that that we were born of the word of God and then he tells us to long for spiritual milk the word word and spiritual both come from the same Greek root if you're reading it in Greek they look almost identical and so he's saying here so the word spiritual here it's not the same word that's used later in the passage if you look at verse 5 it says that the church is called a spiritual house that and a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices so it's a different word so it actually as spiritual it's translated spiritual but actually means something more like true to the nature of appropriate or corresponding to the nature of so what that means here then is that this milk is true to the nature of our new birth by the word of God so he's saying crave the milk and milk obviously symbolizes nourishment sustenance so crave that milk that is true to the nature of your new birth in Christ the deceitless the one something that is deceitless and true to nature of your birth by the word of God that's what he's referring to and the milk here even though in other parts of the Bible the word milk is contrasted with solid food to refer to kind of food for immature

[23 : 25] Christians so he's saying well mature Christians should eat solid food but milk should be reserved for immature Christians but that's not the contrast that Peter is drawing here because this is a milk for all of us so he's saying this is good milk pure milk spiritual milk that every believer needs every church is fed on is grown by nurtured by so that's the milk that is in view so what exactly is this milk that's probably the question you're wondering and some people think that the milk here refers to the word of God and that's possible but I think that would be a little bit inconsistent with the metaphor that Peter is using because he's saying we were born by the word of God and now we're nursed by the spiritual milk so it's not consistent if that's what he's doing in terms of metaphor and I think the key to understanding is in the actual Old Testament verse that Peter's quoting which is Psalm 34 8 and in Psalm 34 8 which was part of our cult worship and in the Greek version of the psalm which Peter would have been using it says oh taste oh taste and see that the

Lord is good blessed is the man who hopes in him and notice the parallel statements between tasting and seeing that the Lord is good and setting our hope on him those two things are parallel and that should immediately ring a bell it should sound familiar because we just learned about in chapter 1 verse 13 Peter was exhorting us to set our hope fully on the grace that will be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ so that's note the logical connection there so that in verse 2 and 3 as well if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good then long for this pure spiritual milk so what we have tasted is the Lord himself so then what we ought to long for the pure spiritual milk also is the Lord himself it's the grace of God it's the grace of our Lord that's what we're supposed to set our hope on and that's what we're being called to long for and crave the milk is God himself his grace and isn't it's cool how

Peter leaves out the sea part but he includes the taste part taste if you have indeed tasted that the Lord is good and that's such an intimate metaphor right because if you think about the five senses that we have seeing hearing smelling and touching not all of those are external it's outside of ourselves but tasting involves ingesting right it becomes a part of us when we eat something so it's such an intimate and powerful picture of us savoring tasting him making God part of us becoming a part of God so it's not enough that we just hear about him we have to taste him and those that have partaken of God through his spirit will continue to long for more of that milk more of God's grace and John Piper who's a pastor a theologian he writes about this truth in his book *Desiring God* he writes all the evils in the world come not because our desires for happiness are too strong but because they are so weak that we settle for fleeting pleasures that do not satisfy our deepest souls he continues in another part of the book he says

I know of no other way to triumph over sin long term than to gain a distaste for it because of a superior satisfaction in God unless we have tasted that the Lord is good have savored him and find more joy and satisfaction in that than anything else we will not be able to overcome sins in our lives the temptations that we face because we won't long for God that spiritual milk more than we long for those things and that of course means that we have to make use of the means of grace that God has given us spending time in prayer being in God's word where we can encounter him and God speaks to us so that's what is in view here to say so if the reason why we have to love one another is because we have been born of the living word the means by which we grow in that and love one another is by being nursed by this milk life-giving milk of God's grace and finally if you look at verses 4 to 10

Peter tells us the purpose the goal of our love for one another and that is that we would be reared that word has two different senses of raising or caring for but also of building and constructing so that we are to be reared on the living stone it's been a little while so let me just recap by reading verses 4 to 10 follow along with me there it says as you come to him a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ for it stands in scripture behold I am laying in Zion a stone a corner stone chosen and precious and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame so the honor is for you who believe but for those who do not believe the stone that the builders rejected has become the corner stone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense they stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do but you are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light once you were not a people but now you are

[29 : 36] God's people once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy I don't know if you're noticing or following all the parallels here between Christ and his church it says in verse 4 that Christ is a living stone and then in the same verse it says that Christians likewise are living stones in verse 6 says that Christ is the cornerstone the cornerstone of a house and it says that in verse 5 that Christians are that house which Christ is the cornerstone of it says in verse 7 that well it says that verse 7 that honor is for you who believe and the word that's translated precious here of Christ Christ is the precious cornerstone means honored literally so Christ is the honored stone and we likewise are honored right and these parallels exist because we are now a part of Christ right because we have been born again into his family and we are part of the construction the building work that God is undertaking right now and it's because our nature derives from the resurrected

Christ that we are now a spiritual house living stone and honored because of what Christ has done for us and this is such a powerful truth that emphasized the unity of the church because our bodies who we are people sometimes talk about we are the temple of Christ like our bodies are the temple of Christ and that's a true statement that's also a biblical statement we as individuals are also the temple of Christ but even more importantly we sometimes neglect the fact that we as a body as a church is the temple of God and that's what it is referring to when he says we're a spiritual house we're a house of the spirit we're supposed to be indwelt by the spirit and together as a church we make up that house and the household is why I said household earlier is because this word house can mean the literal construction the building of a house but also can refer to a household and I think Peter has that double meaning in view because that's the context of the psalm that he is citing but also because he's continuing that metaphor of the family you've been born again now you've been nursed by the milk and now you are being built as a family as a household and you're being built as stones as well as a physical house and Charles

Spurgeon once commented on this in one of his sermons in his characteristic wit he says I know there are some who say well I have given myself to the Lord but I do not intend to give myself to any church now why not because I can be a Christian without it and then Spurgeon continues are you quite clear about that you can be as good a Christian by disobedience to your Lord's commands as by being obedient there is a brick what is it made for to help build a house it is of no use for that brick to tell you that it is just as good a brick while it is kicking about on the ground as it would be in the house it is a good for nothing brick so you rolling stone Christians I do not believe that you are answering your purpose you are living contrary to the life which Christ would have you live and you are much to blame for the injury you do being a spiritual house is not optional for believers if you are not being reared on the living stone being built up as a part of this spiritual house that God is building then you are not fulfilling your very purpose as a Christian that's why there's no such thing as an independent Christian on my own Christian there's no such thing as having a relationship with God on your own because by virtue of your relationship with God if you really did have a relationship with God you by necessity have a relationship with his people his family that's what it means to be in the family if you know the father then you know your brothers and sisters you're either a brick that is part of a house or a good for nothing brick you're either believer a member of the body of Christ the church or you're a detached limb that is as good as dead and because we are reared on the living stone of Christ and this is the purpose for which we have been born again this is the reason why this is the purpose the goal for which we love one

another is so that we can be built up with this stone on this living stone that can be reared on this living stone and grow and this is a really hard constant to grab a grasp
I think especially for evangelicals and because you'd often hear people say evangelicals will say things like you know but whether you're a member of a local church or not every Christian is part of the universal church aren't they and that's true right we are part of the universal church but if you give no evidence of your heavenly membership in that universal church by having an earthly membership in the local church then you're resting on false assurance right because you can't separate the two in this life right this is the church that God's given and this is the church the local church that Peter is writing to and Simon Chan a professor at Bible University writes this in his book Liturgical Theology this is a little bit dense but I'll explain in a second to try to follow along with me says the evangelical movement is largely a parachurch rather than a church movement the visible form of evangelicalism is non ecclesiology it's the voluntary society in which the congregation is the ultimate source of authority the born again experience that unites evangelicals has tended to highlight the value of trans ecclesial fellowship rather than ecclesial structures this means that what is really important to evangelicals is the fellowship of all genuine believers regardless of which visible churches they come from the visible church thus becomes in terms of the salvation history irrelevant in other words what evangelicals offer is a docetic ecclesiology where the real church is perceived as spiritual inward and invisible and has no direct correlation with the visible church but what evangelicals need is a theological ecclesiology that sees ecclesial life in the local church as coming into union with the triune

[36 : 17] God with the father son and the holy spirit and this is what gives the true church its mark as the church of Jesus Christ the church is the God ordained local assembly of believers that gathers regularly that have committed to one another that gathers regularly as the family of God they teach the word of God they baptize and then they share in the body of Christ through communion and as you eat and drink for the body and blood of Christ we also recognize that we are becoming the body of Christ we are the body of Christ and we are assured of that fact and the church also practices church discipline and establishes a biblical structure of leadership they live together they pray together they grow together and all of these things none of these all of these things are found in a church but not all of them can be found in any single parachurch right because parachurch by definition is dealing with the narrower slice of the body of Christ either they're specializing in college students or men or women or they do not have biblically sanctioned leadership structures so therefore they can't then rightly distribute communion or to practice church discipline and all of it because there's no such structure you can't say just because you are doing Bible study with people or you have a relationship with other believers that you are part of the spiritual house and you are being built up as a church without your membership in the local church the church that Christ promises that even the gates of Hades will not prevail against so then if this is how important this church is if this is the goal the purpose for which we have been born again that we why we are to love one another so that we can be built up into this house how do you become a part of this house and the answer is in verses 7 to 8 so the honor is for you who believe but for those who do not believe the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense they stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do just as Christians are those who are born of the living word non-Christians by definition are those who disobey the word and what is this word is told us in chapter 1 verse 25 this word is the good news that was preached to you the word is the gospel of Jesus Christ the good news that the son of man that Jesus Christ came to save us sinners came into the world to save sinners like us that's the good news and that's what separates unbelievers from believers right and this is unavoidable because you have to make a decision on this fact Christ is on the path the Christ the living stone is on the path of every human being and you have to confront him on your journey either you'll confront him and you will stumble over him he will become a rock of offense and you will reject him and disbelieve in him or you will put your faith in him believe in him and build yourself around and on top of that living stone there's two choices and it's inevitable that you go through one of those things and this is the good news that this is the good news that we should that we project and that we share with all around us right and this happens and this is why we are also being built up as a spiritual house so we may proclaim the excellencies of God right he says that's the ultimate purpose the penultimate purpose is that we be built up as a church for the ultimate purpose that God would be glorified his praise would be proclaimed his excellency would be proclaimed throughout the world right and it's by this good news that we have become as it says in verse 9 a chosen race a

royal priesthood a holy nation a people for

his own possession now this is such a radical claim right because he's writing here he's saying peter's saying there's no jew gentile greek or roman black or white or hispanic or asian right among christians we constitute ourselves a new race as believers we are a new race in christ he says of those who have been born again into living hope through the resurrection of jesus christ we are also a royal priesthood we are those who people on earth who mediate between god and the rest of the world we are the ones that infuse this world with the kingdom of god we are a holy nation it tells us we do not belong merely to the united states of america or to korea or to china right we belong to the holy nation of christians of believers of the family of god and this reality not more legislation or simple political correctness that's going to fundamentally solve racism and tribalism and international hatred and enmity right and jonathan edwards writes about this in his book the nature of true virtue because if our highest good is our family then we are going to discriminate against other families if our highest good is our gender then we are going to become sexist and discriminate against other genders if our highest good is our country then we are going to be patriotic jingoistic right and discriminate against other countries right only if god is our highest good supreme good Can we truly be united as people? And so this is the true solution for the problem that plagues our society now. And Lindsey Brown, who was once the CEO of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, wrote this in his book, Shining Like Stars.

He illustrates this fact in a powerful story. Because during the Burundi genocide in the early 90s, a number of Tutsis were killed in tribal fighting against the Hutus.

And this was on campus, a college, Bujumbura University. And during this time, the Hutus, Hutus were the ones that killed the Tutsis, Hutu Christians followed the Tutsi Christians into the cave that they were hiding in to bring them food and clothing.

[42 : 46] And as they did that, they became disowned by their own family. Because they were saying that you're putting your Christian alliance and loyalty higher than your allegiance to your tribe, your people, your family. And because of this event, the non-Christian president of Bujumbura University made this announcement.

He said, Our culture is disintegrating. On our campus, there are three groups of people. Hutus, Tutsis, and Christians.

If our culture is to survive, we must follow the example of the Christians. We are a holy nation.

A new race of God's people. A priesthood. A royal priesthood. And all of this, as a result, not of our own works, of our own deserving, but God's mercy, says in verse 10.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

[43 : 55] We had been unfaithful to God. We had left Him. And so we had disowned Him. We were not His people. But by His grace and through His reproachment, through His Son, Jesus Christ, we are now His people.

And we have now received mercy. Imagine if every believer truly considered and understood the importance of being a member of the household of God.

Imagine if we really loved one another because we have been born of the living word, because we have been nursed by the milk, the life-giving milk. So that we can be built and reared on this living stone.

Now that would be a magnificent spiritual house indeed. Fitting for the faithful Father and majestic King that we serve.

Fitting for the faithful Father and the Holy Spirit. With that, let's...