

## **Our ID in Christ (14): Beloved!**

### **2 Peter 3:1-18**

<sup>1</sup>This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

<sup>2</sup>that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,

<sup>3</sup>knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

<sup>4</sup>They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

<sup>5</sup>For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,

<sup>6</sup>and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

<sup>7</sup>But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

<sup>8</sup>But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

<sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

<sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,

<sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

<sup>13</sup>But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

<sup>15</sup>And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

<sup>16</sup>as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

<sup>17</sup>You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

<sup>18</sup> But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

## [INTRODUCTION]

Hallelujah!

Up to today, over the course of 14 weeks, we have been meditating on our identity through the words of 1 and 2 Peter. Today, we will conclude this journey by looking at 2 Peter chapter 3.

Throughout the entirety of 1 and 2 Peter, we've encountered an abundance of identities that define us as Christians. Each one is a precious and clear heavenly ID for us believers. However, I believe that as we come to the final chapter, there is one ID that the aging Apostle Peter continues to emphasize, and it will encompass all the others.

As 2 Peter concludes, this particular phrase is repeated more frequently. Shall we read through it together?

<sup>1</sup> This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

<sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

<sup>17</sup> You therefore, beloved... (*agapetoi*, beloved)

→ "James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder)" (Mark 3:17)

In today's chapter 3, the very last chapter of 1 and 2 Peter, we see an unusually frequent use of the phrase "Beloved." This term, *agapetoi* in Greek, originally appears in the Gospels as a designation for Jesus Christ. It is the very word God the Father used to declare His love for His one and only Son, saying, "This is My beloved Son (*agapetos*), in whom I am well pleased!"

However, after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, this same term began to be used by the apostles—Paul, John, and today, Peter—to refer to us, Christians who live with Jesus Christ as our Lord. "Beloved," *agapetoi*, is now a shared identity for all of us who belong to Christ.

I believe this is the Father's most special calling to His children. Hallelujah! Within this single word lies the fullness of our identity:

"You are My beloved son! You are My beloved daughter! You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own possession!"

With this highest identity as children of God who live abundantly in the Father's love, today's passage in 2 Peter 3 calls us to reflect. As we live in these last days, what must we remember, restore, and hold fast to until the end? That is the key message of this final chapter.

So today, as the Lord once again calls us by this precious identity, "Beloved," let us reflect on how we should continue to grow. Just as children who are deeply loved naturally radiate beauty, we, as those living in the overflow of God's love, are called to radiate His beauty in our lives.

It is my heartfelt prayer and blessing that each of us will live as God's beloved children, shining beautifully in His eyes, fully embracing and embodying the love of our Lord.

## [MAIN]

### 1. Restore Sincerity! (*Purity*)

First, beloved children are called to "restore sincerity" within us. This sincerity refers to *purity*—the kind of purity and simplicity that is untainted and wholehearted. Shall we read together verses 1, 11, and 14 from today's passage?

<sup>1</sup>This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

→ **To be sincere:** *Pure, not mixed*, free from impurities, in its original and true state.

→ **Spotless and blameless:** *Pure, untainted character*, uncontaminated nature, reflecting the original and true essence of one's character.

The purpose of writing these two letters, 1 and 2 Peter, ultimately comes down to this: to awaken and remind you of your sincere mind.

The word "awaken" in the New Testament is expressed as *diegeiro*—"Wake up!" It's a call to alertness and readiness. This is Peter's *wake-up call*, but ultimately, it is the *wake-up call* of our Heavenly Father to His beloved children.

“Wake up! Get up! Stop sleeping your life away and dreaming empty dreams! Now is the time to awaken and remember who you truly are as My beloved children with sincere hearts—and to restore that identity!”

The term “sincere mind” here uses the Greek word *eilikrinēs* (εἰλικρινής), which means *pure, not mixed*, free from impurities, in its original state. As summarized earlier, it refers to purity, untainted by anything foreign, and reflects the original essence.

Similarly, the phrases “holy conduct and godliness” in verse 11 convey the same meaning: *holy and pure*. Furthermore, the expression “spotless and blameless” in verse 14 also points to an *untainted character*—a purity that mirrors one’s original nature.

Through the Apostle Peter, we see that the sincere heart and nature God’s beloved children are called to restore is their original state, their original character. And when was this original state? It is from the very beginning, when “God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God.”

To be created in the image of God, who is Pure Himself, means not just resembling Him outwardly but inwardly, as God is spirit. Our inner nature was originally created to reflect God’s goodness, holiness, and purity.

However, through our sinful nature, the image of God within us became severely distorted, mixed with impurity, holiness was shattered, and we became deeply corrupted.

In such a state, where God’s goodness, justice, righteousness, and love were fading from within us, and we were descending into despair, our Heavenly Father sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world in human form.

Through Jesus, God revealed the pure image of Himself in a clear and tangible way. Now, as Christians called to be new creations in Christ, we follow Jesus—the perfect example of God’s pure image. Though the journey is difficult, as we walk the path of the cross, a path of eternal life and joy, we begin to resemble our Lord more and more, even as sinners.

This is the original image—the sincere heart and character—that God’s beloved children are called to restore.

Now, the question becomes: how can we practically restore this purity, this holiness, and this godliness in our lives? As repeatedly emphasized, simply appearing holy outwardly or speaking of holiness and godliness with our lips does not restore the pure, original image of God.

While many passages speak to this, James 1:27 provides a particularly clear answer. Let’s read it together.

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: (1) to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and (2) to keep oneself unstained from the world.” (James 1:27)

→ **Restoring Sincerity:** (1) Godliness expressed through caring for others. (2) Godliness expressed through self-reflection before God.

Here, we see that two aspects are emphasized together.

First, **(1)**: “To visit orphans and widows in their affliction!”—this is godliness expressed through caring for others. Then, **(2)**: “To keep oneself unstained from the world!”—this is godliness expressed through self-reflection before God.

However, Scripture does not say that simply fulfilling **(2)**—keeping oneself unstained from the world and avoiding sin before God—is sufficient to be called “pure and undefiled godliness.” On the contrary, the order places **(1)** first. This reminds us that true sincerity, the original *purity* we are called to restore, includes a clear and vital aspect of loving and caring for others.

Isn’t our God remarkable? He never says, “Just do well before Me! Just love Me, and that’s enough!” Instead, He always calls to us: “Beloved, it is fitting that you love one another!” When He sees our love for others, especially those entrusted to us within any community, He recognizes it as genuine and undefiled godliness, declaring, “How pure! How sincere! My beloved son, My precious daughter!” Hallelujah!

Thus, restoring sincerity fundamentally means this: recognizing our own weaknesses before God while also faithfully caring for others whom He has entrusted to us.

This is why we, too, must always **wake up!** Be alert and remember clearly who we are—children beloved by the Lord, created in His image. Restoring this truth and identity is an essential part of our calling.

## **2. Remember the Word of the Lord!**

Secondly, beloved children are called to “remember the Word of the Lord!” Shall we read verse 2 together?

<sup>2</sup>that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,

→ Rather than simply memorizing, always remember the truth conveyed by Scripture.

The phrase “the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets” uses the perfect tense here, referring to the Word of God already proclaimed in the past through the Old Testament prophets. Following that, “the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken through your apostles” refers to the Word of God delivered through the apostles at the time, which is the New Testament. In essence, this passage emphasizes the importance of remembering the Word of God as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments.

When we hear the phrase “remember”, some might misunderstand it as a call to memorize every word from Genesis in the Old Testament to Revelation in the New Testament. While memorizing as much Scripture as possible can indeed be helpful for one’s faith, this is not simply about rote memorization. Rather, it’s about continually “remembering the truth conveyed by Scripture” as shown above. This is especially vital because the following verses warn that in the last days, scoffers will come and deliberately challenge and distort these truths.

<sup>3</sup> knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

<sup>4</sup> They will say, (2) “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”

<sup>5</sup> For they deliberately overlook this fact, that (1) the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,

<sup>6</sup> and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

→ (1) Denial of God's creation (the beginning) (2) Ignorance of God's judgment (the end)

In the last days, as we Christians try to live according to God's Word and strive to restore a sincere heart within us, "mockers" will appear and say, "Where is the promise of His coming? You've been waiting for so long, but He didn't come in your ancestors' time, and He won't come in yours either. Everything continues just as it always has. Just focus on living well in this world and enjoy life."

These mockers, who ridicule those of us trying to restore the sincere heart and follow God's Word, even mock the promise of Christ’s return. They create doubt in us and deceive the believers.

These mockers intentionally try to make us forget, or blur, two key truths: (1) **The denial of God's creation**, and (2) **The disregard for God's judgment**.

(1) The first truth they try to make us forget is that "God created the heavens and the earth." They want us to deny the very beginning, the foundation of our existence. By dismissing the creation of all things by God's Word, especially us—God's children, made in His image—they undermine the fundamental identity of who we are. Instead, they push us to think that we are products of the world, not created by God, and thus focus only on worldly concerns. "Why obsess over God's creation? Isn't a scientific approach more logical and rational? Isn't the creation story just a literary expression, like other myths?" In this way, they trivialize the beginning of God's Word, which is also our beginning, and try to shake the root of our identity—that we are created by God and belong to Him.

(2) The second thing these mockers disregard is **God's judgment** in the end. They downplay the reason for God’s judgment, such as the flood during Noah’s time. In Genesis 6, the reason for the flood is made very clear: "The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." By disregarding God’s judgment, they blur the concept of **human sin**. They downplay the seriousness of sin, questioning why it was such a big deal to eat from the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil. They even suggest, "If God put the tree there in the first place, isn't that His fault?" They claim, "I've never hurt anyone; why would there be a judgment? The current reality is what matters!"

In this way, they dismiss our original sin, the need for reconciliation with God, and the purpose of Jesus Christ coming to earth, dying, and rising again. By disregarding the beginning and end of Scripture—**God's creation and His judgment**—they make the most important event in the middle, which is the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, unnecessary.

Why? Because the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, points to **Jesus Christ** as our only living hope. The Old Testament focuses on the coming Messiah, while the New Testament centers on the Savior who has already come, and His message spreading across the world. This brings us to the final verse in 2 Peter, where this truth is emphasized. Let's read verse 18 together.

<sup>18</sup> But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

→ Grow in the grace of the Lord and in the knowledge of Him, between creation and judgment!

As we live between creation and judgment, between the beginning and the end, let us keep in mind the truth of Scripture. However, we need not fear judgment, for our Lord is both the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the One who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty God! His Word, the covenant He made with us, will never change, no matter how the heavens and earth may change.

In His grace and through the knowledge of Him, we are called to "continue to grow." Growing in His love and living with it today, this is the true ID we carry as we live.

### **3. Do not forget the Lord's patience!**

Lastly, the beloved children of God must "not forget the Lord's patience." Let's read together from verses 8, 9, and 15 today.

<sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

<sup>15</sup> And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

→ "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night." (Psalms 90:2-4)

In verse 8, it says, "With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day." This is a reminder that we must never forget this one truth. This part is a direct quote from Psalm 90:4. Let's read Psalm 90:2-4 together.

What Psalm 90 speaks about is that our God is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, and for Him, one day or a thousand years is the same. He transcends time and space, being the Almighty God, while we, in contrast, are fragile beings—like dust, who, when told to return, can only return to dust. This is what Peter is reminding us not to forget.

Ultimately, we are weak and helpless, like dust, and yet we live lives full of ups and downs. But our faithful God, our Father, patiently endures for us, as stated in verse 9, and with His eternal and unchanging love, He holds us until we repent.

We have already seen two important things that Peter has emphasized for us to remember: (1) "a sincere heart," which we must recall because we were created in God's image, and we need to restore that sincere heart like the Lord's; and (2) "the Word of God," the truth of Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, that we must always remember. However, in verse 8, Peter emphasizes that this one truth—God's patience—must never be forgotten.

This truth about "our memory" is crucial. We are nothing but dust, and there will come a time when we realize how weak and fragile we are. At that moment, the only thing we can hold onto is not our memory, but the eternal love of our Father, who patiently endures for us and leads us to His house.

It is natural for us to try to keep the "sincere heart" like the Lord's, but as time passes, our strength diminishes. Due to our weakness, we may forget the "sincere heart" we should have. It's also natural for us to meditate on and memorize the Word of God, but as the days go by, our memory will fade, and we might forget the verses we used to know well. Even as we grow older, we may forget the names of loved ones, including our own. But even if we find ourselves in that moment of complete weakness, we can hold on to the truth in verse 15: "Consider that the patience of our Lord is salvation!"

So, we have no fear. I believe that the eternal love of our God, who patiently endures for us, will guide us to salvation and eternal home.

Even in our last moments of weakness, God will always endure for us, unchanging in His love. We must hold on to this truth, not forgetting it, and live by it until the end. This is our true identity as we live today, filled with His love. Hallelujah!



## [CONCLUSION]

Dear beloved saints,

As we conclude our study of 2 Peter today, we have reflected on our identity as those whom God calls "beloved." To summarize:

- Our ID (14): Beloved ones!
  1. **"Restore the truthfulness of the Lord!"**
    - Continuously reflect on your weaknesses before God, and restore the truthfulness of caring for those entrusted to you.
  2. **"Remember the Word of the Lord!"**
    - In between creation and judgment, grow in the grace of Jesus Christ and in the Word that helps us know Him more.
  3. **"Do not forget the Lord's patience!"**
    - Even in the weakest moments of life, live each day knowing that the patience of our Lord is our salvation!

I sincerely pray that each of us, as children of God, will be abundantly filled with His love. May this be true for you and me.