

## **Imperishable Seed**

1 Peter 1:23-25 (excerpt from sermon preached 1/28/18)

1 Peter 1:23-25, “Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding 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 was preached to you. In these verses Peter establishes that our salvation, our new birth, is the result of the Word of God being implanted within our heart like a seed being implanted in the ground.

Salvation is not something that occurs all at once . It is a process - very mysterious process - one in which we often struggle to "feel" that it is even occurring.

Peter's thinking here may have come from his meditation of Jesus' parable of the soils. Only here, Peter only considers the option of what happens in the good soil. When the truth is preached concerning Jesus' death and resurrection, and the call is made for people to turn from their previous lifestyles and commit themselves to a life of faith in Christ and a life of hoping for our eternal inheritance... there are some people who will sincerely believe that message. And in those who do so, Peter says that an imperishable seed has been implanted in their heart.

The point of calling it imperishable is to emphasize that this seed will never die. It is more powerful and more enduring than that which is within you that drives you to sin. It is powerful enough to sustain your faith through the various trials of life.

The point Peter is making is that we are not trusting in ourselves. But neither are we trusting entirely in something outside of ourselves. We are trusting in something that has been implanted into us and is now living and abiding within us.

And everything else about us is dying, but not this seed. This seed will never die. It will never fade. It will never wither. Its strength may not appear all that great at times. We may feel within us that our strength is fading. We may feel that we cannot keep going. We may fall into some sin

and wonder if we will ever be able to be truly holy. We may feel like the light within us is flickering and about to go out .

Our strength may be entirely spent - or so we think. But it is at this time that this imperishable seed within us demonstrates its true power. It is at our weakest moments that God exercises his eternal power and renews our strength.

Not so that we can continue limping along, but so that we can once again soar like eagles.

Peter is quoting Isaiah 40.

The verse Peter quotes is on the banner behind me. But turn in your Bibles to that chapter. We read it today already.

It is truly awesome.

Isaiah 40:28-31, “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary; they shall  
walk and not faint.”

It does not matter how strong you are. Each one of us will in one way or another be brought to the end of our strength. I am not talking about the strength to simply exist in this world. I am talking about the strength to live as God wants. To live a life of holiness and love.

Peter knows that there will be seasons of weakness. He knows that discouragement will come. He knows that true believers will want to quit - will want to stop fighting against the sins of their flesh.

He does not want them to rely upon their own strength. But neither does he want them to be passive and think that actively seeking the kingdom of God is unnecessary. What he wants is for them to lay hold of a power that is bigger than themselves, bigger than anything in this world, but also a power that is living inside of them: That is the imperishable seed of the Word of God.

In Isaiah's day, the Church was in a pitiful condition. God was bringing foreign peoples who were themselves extremely wicked to conquer and ravage his own people for their stubborn sinfulness. God would send his own people into exile.

As they were grieving in a foreign country. As life was far more difficult than they ever dreamed possible, many would have felt that there was no reason to continue. The great and terrible nation of Babylon seemed far too powerful for true believers to ever think that God could ever bring God's people back into the land. God and his people seemed smaller than the real problems of life.

In their darkness, they could not see any ray of hope. It is in this context that God gives a word of hope to Isaiah for his true people.

Isaiah 40:15, "Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust.

Isaiah 40:21-24, "Do you not know? Do you not hear?

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble."

God's message is clear. These nations that seem so powerful to you now. The rulers of the earth who care nothing for God and yet seem so very powerful - they are a drop in the bucket. They are like the flower of the field that lasts only a short time and then fades.

God is the true power. He blows on them, and they wither. Have you studied history? What has come of Alexander the Great? Where is Atilla the Hun? What has come of the mighty Roman empire? Show me a kingdom that is powerful, and I will show you a kingdom that will soon be no more.

But what kingdom will never end? It is the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And that kingdom now lives inside of you. It is the Father's love coming alongside of you to help you in your struggle against sin.

Is it not good to know that the One who is judging you is your loving Father? That he has ransomed you out of a life of sin and now you belong to him? That he is using his eternal power to help you in your struggle against sin?

Isaiah 40:29-31, "He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary,  
and young men shall fall exhausted;  
but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their  
strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint."

Feel the freedom, as a beloved child, to strive to live a life of holy love. And look forward to the day when the last remnants of your sin will be entirely consumed. And you will live eternally at his side.

Amen .

2 Peter 3:18 18 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.