

Imperishable Seed  
1 Peter 1:17-25  
April 29, 2020

Seed. Some of you have planted it already. I'm a little slow, waiting for the night temperatures to not drop below 50°. Seed is kind of a funny thing. How many of you, if you wanted a good stand, would plant seed that had been laying out for a few years? What if you might have even kept it in the refrigerator, would you trust the germination of that seed? Sure you could sow a little extra to make up for it but how much more would you need? There is a problem with seed and much like many items you purchase from the store, there is a date on it. It is kind of like a best plant date. There will be a date, a year when it is expected that you should put that seed in the ground. Why is that? It is because that seed is perishable.

Wouldn't it be nice if seed wasn't perishable? You could buy in bulk, store it in an old coffee can or bucket and when you needed some more, just go to that labeled bucket or can and get some. So easy. You would no longer need to scour the catalogs to pick seed, buy it again and again and then pay to have it shipped to you so you could get that garden or bed planted. It would be great to have seed that didn't perish.

Peter talks of seed that doesn't perish but is he really talking about seed? Yes, his example is of seed from plants and how the grass and the flower that springs up from it will fade away.

We all have seen plants wither and die. First they don't have the fullness to their leaves. The flower which only a few days earlier were bright and full, now have lost that vibrant color and are shriveling up, drying out, only to be thrown out or burned in the fire. It may have been so beautiful but now, it is nothing to look at and only something to be done away with.

Peter, before he writes about seed, begins the text for today talking about how God the Father judges impartially just as we are to be impartial not showing favoritism to the rich or powerful over the weak and poor. No, God doesn't show favoritism. Yes, Jesus said it was hard for a rich man to be saved as hard as trying to squeeze a camel through the eye of a needle. Impossible, it would seem. So even though God shows no favoritism, man seems to think that he can get around it and use power and money and yes in some cases, poverty and weakness to have your own way.

All trusting in these ways is futile. It is futile to think that a person can use their richness or power or weakness and poverty to get past the fact that all this is of the

flesh and not of the Spirit. In fact, Peter writes this text in such a way as to show that it enslaves, it as if someone is holding you hostage, looking for a payoff so you can be freed.

Peter writes that God the Father judges deeds, even though impartially. I know we have learned as we have been taught that when it comes to that last day, standing before Jesus the one who judges, we will be standing before Him knowing all our deeds are tainted, not worthy of reward. No, we know all our deeds are as filthy rags if they are judged based on our flesh. If we were to trust in them, then we would have to do all we could to live out life as in slavery, doing the best we could do, always in fear that we had never done enough, wondering if it was enough, always looking inward, with fear throughout this time of exile.

Yes, we are living in exile, away from our home in heaven but if we are looking to our deeds, then the exile will continue on for eternity. Yes, God judges based on deeds but not on our deeds have been covered over, in fact more than that as they have been made clean, not by a twenty second hand wash with soap or by not being contaminated by something on the other side of the mask but by the deeds of the one who shed His blood for us.

We don't normally think of blood as something that cleans. No, we see blood and in order to get the garment clean, we might need to soak it awhile and then launder it to get it clean. But like the scientific experiments where you were looking to see the strength of what was in a liquid, the titrant was measured closely, drop by drop until with just the right amount of it, the color would change, providing the measurements needed to figure out the answer.

The sins of the world was like a dark liquid in creation. It started with the sin of a man Adam. It has been inherited by all their sons and daughters right down to you and me. Yes, we were sons and daughters of them in the flesh. That flesh which was locked in futility, never being able to rise out of the blackness of sin. It was hopeless. Adam and Eve knew it. They hid, knowing what God had promised them. They knew when God promised something He would carry through and He did. They died. Oh, maybe it took hundreds of years for the flesh to die but spiritually, they died, were separated from the Triune God who had made them there in the garden. They had no hope for the life they knew and enjoyed before being tempted to choose to go against God and then taking from that tree.

Yes, they hid in fear of their creator but not only is God a just God, but one who shows mercy and in that loving care explained to them that even though they deserved death, not only of the body but of the soul, they would be given a son, born of a woman who would make all things new. He would come to deliver them from death and the devil and provide life, life like they had known as they found themselves in a sinless, perfect world after they were created.

That son promised them was the same one Peter talked of, Christ and Him being a lamb without blemish or spot. Peter reminds the reader that God required a lamb without blemish or spot as was required in the sacrifices for their sins in the temple. A lamb's blood was shed until the time when that Son would come to save all by His own shed blood. Jesus the boy who grew to become a man, a sinless man who had no need to die as He and He alone lived life in the flesh, perfectly, never sinning, never needing to pay for His sins as He has none. No, He was sinless, yet He took upon Himself the sins of the world, past, present and future.

Jesus was sent from heaven to come to live and die for the pinnacle of His creation. He had to come because the seed of mankind was perishable. It was destined for death. He wanted to implant in mankind imperishability. He did that by paying the price for sin with His own blood. Someone might possibly die for a friend but for us, this sorry, sin filled lot we are; who would even bother? He did, and went to the cross willingly for us, to purify us, giving us hope, that sure hope we were given through the water and the Word in our baptisms. We were there given faith, faith, not in ourselves but in Him who died, rose again and who ascended to heaven where He now rules in glory, the glory He had before He humbled Himself by becoming one of us.

Yes, He is God, as He has always been, throughout all eternity. Now, though, He has paved the way for all to be saved, to live out life in faith here and forever with Him.

He has done it. We are saved. Seed that was flesh that was perishable is now seed that is of the Spirit, imperishable through Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Imperishable seed. Oh, to have imperishable seed. Yet, we are that seed, ready to be sown so that it can produce to raise up other seed, genetically as we are, imperishable.

Our seed is not genetically of the flesh but of the spirit. Oh, our flesh is still perishable, so many are realizing that now with the virus running around. They are

seeing friends and family, co-workers succumbing to the virus and realizing just how perishable this flesh is.

Yes we have flesh but we have something more and that is a spirit given us of faith that trusts in the promises of Jesus that or flesh, as His was, will rise imperishable on the last day.

People will do all sorts of things to maintain the flesh in this world. Sometimes it seems that they are seeking immortality in this world, but all die. Yes, we have been given flesh to take care of it but it should never be seen as something that is not going to die. If it is just for this flesh, then we are to be pitied, more than all other men. But as Paul wrote the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:19) if that is all there is to this life, yes, it would be all for naught, and yes we are to be pitied.

This flesh is perishable. It is going to DIE. That last breath is going to be taken, no matter how labored, and this flesh will not move again until, the Lord raises it from death to life, imperishable to live with Him forever in a new heaven and earth. Yes, we will die but the Word that lives in us will never die.

Eternal life in a new, raised flesh. Who wouldn't want that? No one has seen it, so many think it is not possible. All seed perishes, becomes useless, as salt that has lost its flavor. But the Word that lives in us through the Holy Spirit, remains forever. That is the good news that has been preached to you.

What are you going to do with that good news? Are you going to store it in the refrigerator as if this seed is just for your flesh and not the flesh of others? You have that special seed, like Jack and the bean stalk that provides abundant life for all.

I don't know why He would entrust it to us, but He did. He came from heaven to a black, sin filled earth because He knew He needed to do what only He could do, die, paying for the sins of the world.

We know sin and the answer for sin and it isn't in the flesh, even our flesh. No the answer is only in the precious blood of Christ. That is where the deeds God looks at, are, when He sees us. He sees the deeds of His Son, in His flesh, who lived the perfect life and died the death of mankind, so that everyone could be saved, not for this world of flesh but the imperishable flesh, seed to come.

We are living a born again life, a life in Christ so that others too will hear of their Savior who was the first to rise imperishable so that we too will rise to imperishability, yes with flesh but flesh that will not have to succumb to any virus or disease or hot or cold or anything that could cause death ever again.