

Ministry of Grace Church

1 Peter 1:13-21 - Speaker Notes

Introduction

Last time we were together, we learned that Peter is encouraging us to rejoice even when we are undergoing various trials of our faith. The reason for rejoicing is that these trials are refining our faith and this refining process is more precious to God than silver or gold and it will result in praise and glory to God when Jesus comes to take us home.

He also pointed out that even though we can't see God now, we believe Him and His message about our salvation. This gives us inexpressible joy knowing that we will receive the fulfillment of that salvation when Jesus comes. The prophets foretold this salvation, but they didn't understand it. As a result, they looked intently at their own prophecies and those of other prophets in order to understand this salvation that they were talking about.

As evidence of the intense study that the prophets went through, we talked about how Daniel studied the prophecies of Jeremiah in order to understand how much longer the Jews were going to have to live in Babylon before they were allowed to return to their homeland. But all the early prophets had to go on were the writings of Moses, David, Solomon, and a few prophets. These manuscripts were not easy to come by, so they had to go to great effort in order to understand God's messages.

We also learned that the prophets aren't the only ones trying to find out more about this salvation that we have. The angels in heaven don't understand it because salvation is something that they can't experience. The only way they can learn about it is to study us Christians, the ones who personally experience this miracle of God.

Stop and think about this for a minute. Before we came to Christ, we had the death sentence on us. We were guilty sinners who deserved to be cast into the Lake of Fire. There was nothing that we could do to rid ourselves of this death sentence. However, God, in His infinite mercy and grace, chose to reveal Himself to us and provided the blood of His only Son to pay the penalty of our sins.

Unfortunately, that's where many Christians stop. They're saved and they know it, and they've said Amen. How does that song go?

If you're saved and you know it, say Amen,

If you're saved and you know it, say Amen,

But that's not where the song ends, is it? And it's not where God wants us to stop either. The song goes on ...

If you're saved and you know it, then your life will surely show it,

If you're saved and you know it, say Amen,

In this next section of Peter's first letter he gets into what God wants from us AFTER we say Amen. God wants us to be completely set-apart to Him. Here's how Peter says it:

1 Peter 1:13-16

Therefore, having girded your minds for action, being sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not being conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your conduct; because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”

The opening phrase of this section: “Therefore having girded your minds for action ...” is awkward to today’s reader. In the day that this was written, it was common for men and women alike to wear long robes. In order to run, a person had to prepare by reaching down between his or her legs, grasping the hem of the back part of the robe, pulling it up through their legs, and tucking it into the belt or sash. This process was known as “girding up the loins” and became a vernacular expression for getting prepared for something. So, you can see that Peter’s expression can be accurately paraphrased as, “Therefore, having prepared your minds for action ...”

Then he says to: “Fix your hope on ...” This is from the word *elpidzō*, meaning “to hope for something with the full expectation of receiving that which is hoped for.” It is expressed here as a command, so it could be translated as, “place your hope in ...” In the first century, people viewed hope differently than we do today. When we say, “I hope this or that will happen to me,” we don’t really expect it to happen. Maybe it will ... maybe it won’t. And if it does, we are pleasantly surprised. However, in the first century if a person hoped for something to happen, they fully expected it to happen. Therefore, when it did happen, they weren’t surprised. In fact, if it didn’t happen, they were very disappointed.

And - what is it that we are to fix our hope on? According to Peter, it’s “the grace to be brought to you...” So, what does he mean by that? We learned last time that even though we have already been legally declared as righteous and are destined for an eternal future in the presence of our holy God, we won’t actually receive our salvation until Jesus comes to call us home. That’s what Peter means. You may be wondering if there is a difference between the salvation of our body and the salvation of our soul. You even may believe, as some do, that the salvation of our soul happened when we confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and the salvation of our body occurs at the rapture. However, I don’t see anywhere in Scripture where a distinction is made between these two.

This salvation, which we Christians sometimes take for granted, has been promised to us by to One who always keeps His promises. It is just as sure as the fact that Jesus is coming back for us. Remember this, we have a better understanding of salvation than any of the Old Testament prophets did, and we understand it better even than the angels in heaven who are watching us to learn more about it. Yet, we still don’t completely understand it.

It’s a great prize, perhaps the biggest prize, which our heavenly Father, the great King of Kings and Lord of Lords has promised to us. And He has promised that He will preserve it until that day when Jesus comes back to fulfill the promise. As we are told in 2 Timothy:

... for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (2 Timothy 1:12b)

Even though this prize is sure there is no reason to take it for granted. Neither should we simply view it as a free pass into heaven. In fact, because of this great gift which has been

given to us and because we are now His, we know what is in store for us. Jesus, himself told us:

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Notice that Jesus did not say “you will have tribulation.” He said, “you have tribulation” (present tense).

Jesus instructs us to “take courage,” but Peter warns us to get ready, prepare our minds for action, stay sober-minded and vigilant, don’t get distracted by all the flashing lights and enticements of this world. Above all, we need to focus all of our hope on the end of the battle, when Christ will complete His work in us.

Peter tells us that we need to live like obedient children. The word translated “obedient” is the Greek word *hupakoē*, which is made up of *hupo* (or *hypo*), meaning “under” and a form of *akuō*, meaning “to hear.” So, it literally means that we are to “hear under.” This is an expression that implies that we are obedient students, submissive to our teacher (the Holy Spirit). By interpretation, it means “to be attentive and submissive.”

We also need to stop being “Conformed.” This is translated from *suschēmatidzō*, a compound word made up of *sun*, meaning “together with” and *schemētidzō*, meaning “to make a pattern.” Hence, this word refers to “someone making something to match with a pattern.” It is expressed here in the middle voice, indicating the action is being done by the subject (yourselves), to the subject. We are no longer to be conformed to the lusts that controlled us before we got saved. We are to overcome them with the Word.

Instead of being conformed to our former lusts, Peter tells us to be holy just as God is holy. The word “holy” is translated from *hagios*. The root of this word refers to that which is pure and without blemish. This word also carries the notion of being set-apart. God is set-apart in that He is without sin, and He is the creator while all others are created beings. People and things which are set-apart for God’s use or in worshipping Him are also considered holy. So, this holiness that Peter admonishes us to acquire means that we are to be set apart **from** sin and the world system and we are to be set apart **to** God for His use as He sees fit.

I recognize that this has been a lot of inspection of the Greek words and their meaning of what Peter is teaching us. So, what does it all mean? Peter is continuing the thought from the previous verse about being prepared for action and focusing on the reward that is to come. First off, he says we need to be obedient. That’s pretty straightforward isn’t it?

Then, Peter tells us not to conform to our former lusts that used to entrap us. Here’s another caution the Apostle Paul gave about conforming:

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, ... (Romans 12:2a)

And, about these lusts, the Apostle James said:

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully matured, it brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)

So you see, Peter is telling us that we are in the midst of spiritual warfare, and we need to follow the commands given by our Commander. And - our actions need to demonstrate that we have changed since we got saved and that we truly are children of God. Peter will finish the rest of this thought in the next verse.

Before we were saved, we had to live like the rest of those in the world system. We had no option; we were slaves to that way of life. But now that we are no longer ignorant of spiritual things, we need to have a change of life. When I was a very new Christian, my pastor said to me that I needed to shed the grave clothes of my old way of life. I didn't have a clue what he was talking about, so he explained it.

When Jesus raised up Lazarus from the dead, he was bound with grave clothes, and as Lazarus came out of the tomb, Jesus commanded that he be unbound and set free (see [John 11:43-44](#)). In the same way, we are born again spiritually. When that first happened, we come forth wearing the same habits and lifestyles that we had before we were saved. And just like Lazarus, we were bound by them and could not know the fullness of the freedom that is ours until we rid ourselves of our past behavior. In other words, the way we live reflects how we really feel about God.

God realizes that as we take off one type of covering, we need to put on another. When commanding us to change something about our lives, He frequently tells us to stop doing something. And, if you look carefully, you will find that either specifically, or contextually, we are also given a command of what we are to do instead.

In today's verse, we are told what to do instead of being conformed to our former lusts; we are to be holy in our behavior. So, what does it mean to be holy? We just learned that it means to be pure and set-apart from our former way of life. But we can't do this ourselves while we still have our sin nature controlling us. However, as we let our powerful, Holy God control us, He is able to produce purity and moral blamelessness in us, and legally we are already set-apart, now we need to be actually set-apart.

It takes a lot of effort on our part (effort to submit and commit), but as we do so, He performs in us what He desires. As the Apostle Paul said in [Philippians](#):

for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
([Philippians 2:13](#))

In the previous verses we were admonished to not be conformed to our former lusts which we followed in our ignorance, but instead to be holy (set-apart and pure) in our behavior because He who called us is holy.

Now, in order to explain why we need to be set-apart, Peter quotes from the Old Testament, where God said:

For I am Yahweh your God. Therefore, set yourselves apart as holy and be holy, for I am holy. ... ([Leviticus 11:44](#))

The word translated "set yourselves apart" is the verb form of the same word that is translated "holy" in this Old Testament passage.

In [2 Corinthians](#) we are commanded to separate ourselves from the world.

"Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. ([2 Corinthians 6:17a](#))

As we just said, one of the key elements of sanctification, or holiness, is the notion of being “set-apart.” A sanctified vessel is one that is set-apart for service in worshipping God. To sanctify oneself, therefore, also carries with it the notion of setting oneself apart. But how do we do that?

In **Romans 12:1-2** the Apostle Paul put it this way:

Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

According to this passage, the way we are to become a holy, living sacrifice is to present our bodies to God. Our body becomes a sacrifice because we give up control over the use of it and commit to letting God choose how we use it. Then, Paul says we are to set ourselves apart from the world system. In other words, instead of allowing ourselves to be controlled by the world system; instead of learning to think and act like we are constantly being pressured to think and act, we need to allow our minds to be renewed by God. And the only way that can happen is by reading and studying the Bible.

Let me repeat that: the **only way** we can renew our mind and become set-apart to God is by reading and studying the Bible.

1 Peter 1:17-19

And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your sojourn, knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold from your futile conduct inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

This section seems to talk about a works-based salvation since it says that God judges according to every man’s work. Taken in isolation from the numerous Biblical verses that talk about salvation being of grace by faith alone, some people have even said that this verse proves that our salvation is based on works. But what does the verse really mean?

As I said previously, the way we live reflects how we really feel about God. He judges us based on what we do, not to earn righteousness (salvation), but as a result of the righteousness (salvation) that has already been given to us. Remember, our righteousness is imputed (given) to us when we believe (see **Romans 4:22-24**).

Now, regarding the works of the unsaved, the description of the Great White Throne Judgment in **Revelation 20:11-15** makes it very clear that the unsaved will be judged according to their works and then will all be condemned to the lake of fire. In other words, the unsaved will be condemned by their works at the Great White Throne Judgment (at the end of time).

But of the saved, the Apostle Paul said:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (**2 Corinthians 5:10**)

This judgment seat of Christ is the *bematos*, or Bema Seat of Christ. In the first century, the Bema Seat was the platform upon which the judge of athletic games sat. It was at this seat that the winners were each given a wreath “crown” as a reward for their victory. Our Bema seat judgment is for believers (winners) only and occurs after the rapture when we have already become like Christ, therefore when we appear before the Bema Seat, we will already be blameless. This is where we will receive rewards for the work we have done for Him. And in [1 Corinthians 3:8-15](#) we learn that our works will be judged as having been done either for the glory of God or for ourselves. Therefore, Peter admonishes us to pass the time of our wandering here on this earth in fear. Not fear of losing our salvation, but fear that we won’t do everything we can to show God how grateful we are. In other words, we will be given rewards for our works at the Judgment Seat of Christ (right after the rapture).

Peter says, “[you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold ...](#)” The word translated “redeemed” is a form of *lutroō*. This word means “to pay a ransom for another’s freedom.” It carries the idea of a person being held without the ability to escape and released only when a sufficient ransom price was paid.

Before coming to faith in Christ, we were captured and in bondage to sin. The only payment that could set us free was life itself. But God, in His infinite mercy, offered the life of His only begotten Son in exchange for our life as the acceptable ransom payment to set us free.

Peter here reminds us that the price of our salvation, the ransom for deliverance from the punishment of sin, has already been paid. But it was not paid with those things which we consider valuable like gold and silver. In fact, as we saw in verse seven, Peter refers to gold and silver as perishable things because they have no lasting value. But the blood of the sinless Lamb of God has eternal value.

He also tells us here that the life we were living before salvation, living under the bondage of sin, was characterized by wandering without purpose. But now that the ransom has been paid and applied to our account, we can choose to live for God (even though we don’t always do it). We now have a purpose in life!

Peter is telling us that we should do good works. These works have lasting value because we were redeemed with something of lasting value. We were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. To a Christian there can be nothing more valuable and precious than the blood of Christ. It is with this blood that complete and sufficient payment was made for all our sins. Hallelujah! He goes on further to say that the manner of life we had before we were saved was vain, that is, worthless or empty. We were delivered from a worthless life by something very precious, therefore we should be holy and make our new life worth something by pursuing works of value for the remainder of our life.

The reason that this blood was sufficient is because He perfectly fulfilled the requirement of the law that the paschal lamb be without blemish and without spot. He was (and is) sinless and perfect. His was the only sacrifice that could satisfy God’s righteous judgment, and it was applied to your sins and mine!

Remember, when Moses was about to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, God told him to instruct the Israelites about the Passover. On the tenth day of the month, they were to select a year-old lamb that was without defect. The word translated “without defect” is

the Hebrew word *tamiym*, which means “completely whole, not lacking anything, completely righteous, pure, or perfect.” They were to watch this lamb for four days, and on the fourteenth day of the month, they were to sacrifice the lamb and sprinkle its blood on the sides and top of the doorway leading into their homes. The presence of this blood would indicate to the death angel to “pass over” the house and not kill the firstborn within that house.

Years later, after the children of Israel had built a temple in the Promised Land, they celebrated this “Passover” celebration every year. On the tenth day of the first month, a Passover lamb was selected and was led through the sheep gate on its way to the temple. When it entered the temple, the people waved palm branches in all four directions and sang “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” and then laid the palm branches before the lamb. The lamb was kept under close observation for four days to determine its purity. Then, on the 14th of Nisan, the lamb was declared to be pure. It was to be placed on the altar from the third hour until the ninth hour when the high priest would kill it and declare, “It is finished.” These Passover observations were a picture of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ was to make to pay the penalty for our sins.

So What?

Peter’s primary message to us is, hang in there, especially when the going gets tough. God promised us that we would have tribulation in this life. But - He also promised us that He will never leave us nor forsake us! Keep in mind what Paul told Timothy:

For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)

Are you preparing yourself daily for spiritual warfare? Are you in the midst of the battle? Or have you settled back into the easy life, satisfying your own desires instead of submitting to God?

Instead of patterning our lives after our former lustful ways, obeying our own desires, we need to become progressively more like God, and progressively more separated from the world and its sinfulness. Take your eyes off yourself and focus them exclusively on God.

On a scale of one to ten, where one is not at all set-apart and ten is completely set-apart and committed to God, where are you right now? (Hint: God wants you to be a ten. Anything less means you have more submitting to do.)

I have often wondered how a person who is saved by God’s grace can then live the remainder of his or her life focusing on self. When we realize the value of God’s sacrifice to pay the price of our sins, we begin to understand how precious salvation really is. Now, what are we doing to show how much we appreciate His sacrifice? Christ died for us; therefore, we should live for Him!

Before salvation we were not free to live as we choose. We were slaves to sin and had no choice but to live for self. Now that we have been ransomed with the blood of Christ, we can choose to live for self or to live for God.

Who do you choose to live for?

Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled the Law and met all the requirements for the Passover Lamb. The Son of God was sacrificed for your sins and mine. Do you realize how valuable that makes your salvation?

How are you showing your appreciation to God for this priceless gift?

God has revealed the plan of salvation to us today in a way and to a degree never before experienced by mankind. How can we ignore that which He has put so much effort into revealing to us. There are more copies of the Holy Scriptures available in more languages and more translations than at any other time since the creation of the world! There is more preaching, there are more radio messages, and there are more television broadcasts, podcasts, and YouTube videos about the Bible than ever before!

And yet, [2 Timothy 4:3](#) says:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ([2 Timothy 4:3](#))

Would you rather listen to a sermon that makes you feel good about yourself, or a sermon that challenges you to be more like God wants you to be?

Let's pray.