

1 Peter 1 (13-16) – Living in Hopeful Holiness

Vs.13 – *Therefore* – “In light of what I have just said”. Vs.1-9 shows you the glory of God’s salvation plan. In vs.10-12, Peter said that the greatness of this salvation could be seen when you look at the OT prophets, NT preaching, and the longing of angels. With that in mind, Peter moves from an examination of salvation to an exhortation for the saved. Vs.13-16 describes the proper response to vs.1-12. Vs.13 deals with how you think, and vs.14-16 deal with how you act.

Vs.13 is a command to hope in future grace, to live for today by having an eye for tomorrow. Over and over again the Bible tells you of the power that a hope in future grace can have in your present life (1 Corinthians 11:26, 15:58 / Ephesians 6:17 / Philippians 3:20-21 / 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 / Titus 2:11-14). And vs.13 also gives you the conditions of keeping that hope active in your life. It’s vital to living the Christian life. Yet hope is a missing element in many Christians’ experience. They have a sense of hope, but they are missing out on the power of hope.

set your hope – this is the imperative of vs.13. The phrases *preparing your minds for action*, and *being sober-minded* are subordinate participles which modify the main verb and clause, “set your hope”. They describe the means to the end, the conditions to meet in order to fulfill the command. So, how do you keep your hope set on the future grace which is to be revealed when Jesus returns? By preparing your mind for action, and being sober-minded.

fully – You are commanded to live in a spirit of sure expectation, fixing your hope completely, clearly, confidently, and resolutely on God (cf. **Colossians 3:1-4**). This isn’t an emotion, but an act of the will, having to do with your attitude toward the future and your actions because of it. This glorifies God, and you grow in present grace to the extent that you hope in future grace.

on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ – Christians have been given grace in their past, they are given grace in their present, and they will be given grace in their future, when Jesus returns (vs.7 / cf. **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**). Only Christians have this hope, and only eternity will fully reveal the riches of God’s grace to you.

preparing your minds for action – This pictures a person whose garments are tucked into their belt so they can move freely (cf. Ephesians 6:14). In today’s language, you could say it’s like “rolling up your sleeves”. You aren’t supposed to let your mind loose, but rather keep your mind under control, ready, freed from thoughts, thinking patterns, and habits that hinder your focus.

and being sober-minded – This pictures a person who isn’t drunk when it comes to spiritual things (cf. 4:7, 5:8). They are alert, and evaluate things correctly, because they see clearly, and their mind isn’t numb with intoxicating influences. People are intoxicated with the pleasures and things of this world, but these steal your zeal, and rob your hope of its present power. People fail to live in hope primarily because they like this life too much. A key to keeping your hope and your passion up is to know what numbs your mind to God and avoid it. This is a healthy, holy fear, a hope in God that He delights in (cf. **Psalms 147:10-11**).

Are you living in hope? What is your hope set on? What gets you ready to go, what captures your mind, what are you focused on? That is where your hope is.

Vs.14-16 – In vs.13-16 Peter describes the believer’s proper response to vs.1-12. Vs.13 deals with how you think, and vs.14-16 deal with how you act. And these things are connected; what you are focusing on will have an effect on how you behave. Peter teaches you that you grow in present grace to the extent that you hope in future grace. It isn’t that future grace (the return of Christ, “heaven”, your eternal inheritance and eternal state, etc.) is all that you are to think about, but that it ought to be at the center of your focus and guide your life (cf. **Colossians 1:3-5**).

Everyone instinctively *recognizes* this, that how you think affects how you act. But many Christians fail to *realize* this, in terms of hope and holiness, because they focus on the wrong things. You know about it, but you aren’t experiencing it. Looking at vs.13, you aren’t actually preparing your mind for action, and you aren’t actually being sober-minded, and so you aren’t actually setting your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And so you aren’t actually living in hope as well as you ought to be.

What’s more, you aren’t living in holiness as well as you ought to be. That’s how Peter continues in vs.14-16, as he makes this connection between how you think and how you live even stronger. Vs.13 commanded you to hope, and vs.14-16 commands you to be holy. And there is a connection between hope and holiness; Peter says that where there is a longing for future grace there will be a longing for present holiness (cf. **1 John 3:1-3**). If you aren’t really living in holiness you aren’t really living in hope; your mind is set on earthly things. But a mind that is set on God will produce a life that is set apart for God. To live in hope is to live a holy life.

Look at the command of vs.14-16, to be holy, in the context of the command of vs.13, to hope. When you are failing to live the right way, it is because you are failing to focus on the right things. And you can fail to focus on the right things because you let your mind run loose, instead of keeping it under control, ready, freed from thoughts, thinking patterns, and habits that hinder your focus. And you can be intoxicated with the pleasures and things of this world, which steal your zeal, and rob your hope of its present power. And so therefore your obedience to the command to be holy is not born out of your God-given hope, it is attempted in your own strength, and it doesn’t work. The solution is to fix your focus, and remember who you are.

As obedient children – God’s children are marked by obedience. These aren’t children who happen to be obedient; these are “children of obedience”, which is what they are, as opposed to what they were (cf. **Ephesians 2:2, 5:6**). The character of a non-Christian is disobedience to God, but the character of a Christian is obedience to God. Obedience is the parent of the believer; we bare the image of God who *has caused us to be born again* (1:3).

You are not a child of God because you obey; you obey because you are a child of God. You are born *of* obedience, and you are born *for* obedience. This is a term for a Christian; they are an obedient child. They are not perfectly obedient, of course, but they are purposefully obedient, for sure. The desire of their hearts is to obey and please their Father. It is the working out of their new nature. Oh how low a view of regeneration we have in the visible church world today. But Peter says that if you are born again, you were born again as an obedient child. And God’s children should grow. Yes, it requires effort and discipline to obey God. But for the born again Christian, obedience is not simply a duty, given begrudgingly. It is a desire, given from the heart of faith that’s been given to you. What’s your heart’s desire, what’s your hope?

do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance – Peter is echoing the rest of the NT in saying, “Don’t act like you did when you were children of disobedience” (**Romans 12:2 / 2 Corinthians 7:1 / Ephesians 4:17-20 / Colossians 3:9-10 / 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5**). Fulfilling God’s call to holiness requires that you, as an obedient child, break off with the lifestyle of the world (characterized by lusts and ignorance). You are to resist the power of these passions.

Remember, living in hope has to do with your attitude toward the future and your actions because of it. You should be growing, being less and less conformed to the patterns of the world, and more and more conformed to the pattern of Christ. Can you identify areas in your life where you have grown or are growing out of your former ignorance, moving away from your former passions? You move toward what you focus on, and it grows in its influence in your life.

but as he who called you is holy – holiness is not simply morality; the basic meaning is to be set apart. The holiness of God refers to His utter uniqueness. He is set apart in that none compares with Him (cf. 1 Samuel 2:2). He is in a class by Himself, unequalled, unrivaled, totally underived, and absolute in His being and perfection, without beginning or ending or improvement. God repeatedly describes Himself as “holy” (Leviticus 21:8 / Isaiah 43:3 / Hosea 11:9). Human beings who know Him intimately describe him as “holy” (Joshua 24:19 / Psalm 99:9). The angels that continually surround His throne describe Him as “holy, holy, holy” (Revelation 4:8). God’s holiness is a qualifier of His other attributes, it characterizes them (cf. **Isaiah 5:16**).

So how do the holiness of God, the glory of God, and the righteousness of God relate to each other? The holiness of God is the supremacy of His infinite worth. The glory of God is the outward expression of that perfection (cf. Isaiah 6:3). The righteousness of God is His faithfulness in acting in accord with His glory and His holiness (cf. Psalm 143:11). If God were ever to act as if He was not ultimate and His glory was not the supreme value in the universe, He would be unrighteous. His action would be untrue.

you also be holy – Christians are set apart for God, and belong to Him, because He called them out from the world (*he who called you* / cf. Ephesians 1:4). You now have the ability to obey (cf. **Romans 6:17-18**). You are living in holiness when you are not being conformed to the passions of your former ignorance (cf. Galatians 5:19-21 / Ephesians 2:1-3 / 1 John 3:4-10). Instead, you are reflecting a heart set on God, as you seek to honor, obey, please, serve, and worship Him.

in all your conduct – holiness is not mere morality, it is a conscious desire to glorify God, which means you are revealing His character through your character, by living a consistently faithful biblical lifestyle. This is about not only your actions, but your ambitions and your attitudes.

since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” – Leviticus 11:44-45, 19:2 – you are to be holy for His sake because you are identified as His child. So how do you live a holy life? You keep your mind set on God, His grace, and your future, you turn from your passions, and you pursue Him in the power of His Spirit (cf. **1 Thessalonians 4:7-8 / Hebrews 12:14**).

To live in hopeful holiness is to glorify God and enjoy Him, and it is contagious. When you live in a hopeful holiness it will make you like salt and others will become thirsty for Christ. You are called to do it, and you can do it. Peter just showed you how. Amen.