

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Hope, Holiness, and Honor

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:13-17

Code: 60-10

Let's open our Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 1. Returning to this wonderful epistle which is so instructive for us, we come tonight to verses 13 through 17, 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 13 through 17. This particular section deals with the believer's response to God's great salvation.

When Jesus said, "To whom much is given, much is required," He gave a principle that certainly relates to the Christian's response to salvation. Since no greater gift could ever be given than the gift of salvation in Christ, no gift then could ever demand a greater response. The greatest gift carries with it the greatest obligation. Salvation grace then brings to us the greatest responsibility.

Now you'll remember back a few months ago, before we left you for a few months, that we looked at the opening twelve verses of this great first chapter. And in verses 3 through 9, salvation was majestically described. Peter focused in those verses on the nature of salvation. And then coming into verse 10 he began to look at the greatness of salvation. He pointed out the surpassing greatness of salvation as evidenced by four great things.

First of all, you'll remember, in verse 10 and then the beginning of verse 11 he shows that salvation was the great theme of the prophets' study. The prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come made careful search and inquiry, looking into the very salvation of which they spoke in order that they might understand what person and what time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. Salvation is great because it is the primary theme of the prophets' study. And then in verse 11 they sought to know what person, what time, the details of the very things they wrote.

And secondly, salvation is great because it is the theme of the Holy Spirit's inspiration. Verse 11 says it was the Spirit of Christ within them that was in indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. The theme of prophets' study, the theme of Spirit inspiration.

Thirdly, he comments on the greatness of salvation because it was the theme of the Apostles' proclamation. He says in verse 12 toward the end that it was revealed to them that we're not serving ourselves but you in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel. That's the phrase...announced through those who preached the gospel...the Apostles. The theme of prophets' study, the theme of Spirit's inspiration, the theme of the Apostles' proclamation and then finally the theme of the angels' interest. At the end of verse 12 he says that

the angels long to look into the greatness of salvation. What a great salvation. What a marvelous reality was introduced in verses 1 and 2, to be chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood. And having introduced the thought of salvation he then explains its nature through verse 9 and affirms its greatness through verse 12.

Now we come to verse 13. There's a definite shift in Peter's thought here. Up to this point all the verbs are in the indicative mode, that is they state fact. Now they begin to be imperative, they make commands. The facts have been stated and here are the commands. Salvation has been described and now the duty to those who have received it is commanded. And suddenly a very dramatic shift from stating fact to giving command. These are exhortations based on the great privilege of receiving the gift of salvation.

And as Peter exhorts the reader and as he exhorts us, he sums up all of our relationships because salvation has implications for all our relationships. First of all, he discusses our responding obligation to God in verses 13 through 21. Then our responding obligation to others in verses 22 through 25, and then our responding obligation to ourselves in the first part of chapter 2. So he embraces all relationships-- our relationship to God, our relationship to others, our relationship to self. All of those relationships are impacted by the greatness of salvation and each of those relationships demands a proper response.

Now as he begins to apply the obligation that comes upon those who have received this great salvation, he starts with our obligation toward God. And I'd like us to at least begin to look at this tonight in verses 13 through 17. The obligation we have to God because of the great salvation which He has granted to us by His grace. That obligation can be summed up in three words-- hope, holiness and honor...hope, holiness and honor. And those are the three words that we want to examine in these verses.

Let's begin with the first word in verse 13 it appears. "Therefore gird your minds for action, keep sober, fix your...here's the key word...hope completely on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Now as we look at that verse, I want to draw you to the main verb in the verse and it is this, "fix your hope." That is the first exhortation...fix your hope. The word "therefore" at the beginning of verse 13 as always is a word of transition, it takes us from statement to application, from fact to inference. And the main emphasis of verse 13 is fix your hope. That's an aorist active imperative, it means that he is stating a direct almost military command, fix your hope, a command for duty on the part of every Christian that calls for an act of the will more than just an emotional feeling. The form of the verb, I believe, calls for a decisive kind of action...hope.

Because we have been saved and because God has given us this great gift of salvation he says fix your hope. That's the first obligation we have, to live in hope. Now hope is a great thing. First

Corinthians 13 says these three things abide, faith...what's the second one?...hope...what's the third one?...love and the greatest of these is love. You've heard plenty of sermons on love. You've seen plenty of books on love. You've heard plenty of sermons on faith and plenty of books on faith. Have you ever heard a sermon or read a book on hope? For some reason we have somehow ignored that. And particularly in our culture hope is a missing element of Christian experience. We don't really live in hope I think primarily because we really like this life so much. Well we'll talk about that in a moment.

We are commanded here to fix our hope, to live in hope. Now what is hope? Basically defined it's the Christian's attitude toward the future, toward the future. Now listen to me carefully so that you'll understand this. Hope in its essence is the same substance as faith. It is believing God. That's the substance of hope. It is trusting God, it is believing God. Only faith is believing God in the present and hope is believing God for the future. It's the same essence. Faith believes what God has said, what God has done, and hope believes what God has promised yet to do. In a sense, faith then is trusting God for the present, hope is trusting God for the future...both are trusting God. To put it another way, faith accepts, hope expects. Faith appropriates and hope anticipates. Faith believes God for what He has done and hope believes God for what He will do.

Now listen to what Peter says. You owe it to God to fix your hope. In other words, to live for the future, to believe God and anticipate the glorious fulfillment of His future promise. We owe God that. That's our obligation, that's what Peter says. This is a command, fix your hope. And you'll notice that after the word "hope" comes the word "completely." Fix your hope completely, it means unreservedly, it could be translated fully, it could be translated perfectly. Once for all fix your hope unalterably without equivocation, without doubt on the one who saved you. One writer says, "Set your hope to the hilt." Not half-heartedly, not indecisively but with finality. This is a settled act. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 6 says fix your anchor within the veil, hook that anchor in that veil that holds to the eternal Word of God and His unfailing promise.

Now follow this thought. We owe our God hope. This great and gracious God who saved us, this great and gracious God who by grace was generous to us beyond description, who proved Himself able to forgive our sins, to provide the perfect sacrifice in Christ on the cross and His resurrection, to redeem us, this God who totally transformed us is worthy of our confident trust for the future as He has proven Himself worthy of our confident trust in the present. If He has been faithful in the past, He will be faithful in the present, He will be faithful in the future. And we are to live in the light of that future. What He promised He will do. Peter has already introduced that. We are, it says in verse 3, born again to a living...what?...hope. Hope should characterize our life, a living hope, a hope for an inheritance, verse 4, which is imperishable, and undefiled and will not fade away, which is reserved in heaven for us, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. We are to live in the hope of that eternal inheritance.

Now please listen. Peter is calling us to hope not so much for how hope effects us, not so much for what it does in our life and it does a lot, hope in our life is a very healthy spiritual exercise, it transcends us from this passing world, it lifts us above the mundane, it elevates us beyond the circumstances that debilitate most people, but he's not calling us to hope because of what it does for us, that's not the point. He's calling us to hope because it glorifies God. You say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, when you truly trust God for the future, you are affirming by that trust that God is trustworthy and that brings Him glory. If you deny God, you doubt God, you disbelieve God, you are saying in effect, I'm not sure you can trust Him. But as a believer who has received God's grace and who has seen that God is faithful in the past and the present, you ought to be able to live in hope that God will be faithful in the future and thereby give Him glory. You are thus adorning the doctrine of God. You are ascribing to God integrity of promise. You are showing that God keeps His promise, He keeps His word, He is a covenant keeping God. We owe Him that allegiance. We should be that loyal to Him. Hope glorifies God.

Let me give you an illustration of it. Turn in your Bible to Romans 4 and I've just introduced the thought, let me support it with a very graphic and somewhat familiar illustration. In Romans 4 verse 16 we jump into the record about Abraham here. It talks about faith and grace and, of course, we know that Abraham received both from God and that Abraham, it says at the end of verse 16, is the father of all the faithful in the sense that he is the prototype of believing God. And then in verse 17 it says, "As it is written, a father of many nations have I made you, in the sight of him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist." Now verse 18, "In hope against hope Abraham...what...believed." Now what does that mean? Well God said to Abraham, you're going to have...what?...a son. God came to Abraham and Sarah and said you're going to have a son. Abraham was nearly a hundred years old, Sarah was in her nineties and they thought that was pretty silly since they had never been able to have a child in all the years before. And that's why it says that Abraham had hope against hope...hope when from every human perspective there was no substance and no basis for such hope. But it was in hope against hope that he believed. And verse 19 says, "And without becoming weak in faith," and again you see faith equated with hope because faith is a kind of hope placed in the future..."Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and he contemplated also the deadness of Sarah's womb." Now he's got reality to deal with on the one hand and reality says my body is dead in terms of progeny, Sara's body is dead in terms of conception, yet verse 20 says, and here's the key, "With respect for the promise of God he did not...what?...waver in unbelief." Isn't that great? He had respect for the promise of God...that's hope. And he grew strong in faith even though it was hope against hope, humanly impossible, and as a result the end of verse 20 says he gave glory to whom? To God.

Can I put it to you simply? God is glorified when you trust Him. God is glorified when you believe Him. God is glorified when you hope in His future promise. And I think that's what Peter is really

after. He's not so much talking here about hope because of what it does for the believer, he's talking about hope because God is so worthy. The God who has given us such a great salvation is worthy of our hope, being fixed entirely unreservedly and completely on Him and on the specific promise He has made.

Let's go back to the verse. In setting our hope on God, what is it that we hope for? I love this, verse 13, "Fix your hope completely on this fact, the grace...the Greek says...being brought to you...present tense...at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Now notice this, fix your hope, fix your hope on what? On the revelation of Jesus Christ? No. Fix your hope on the grace to be brought or being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We're looking at here the Second Coming. We're looking at the apokalupsis, the revealing, the unveiling of Christ. It's the same word used in chapter 1 verse 7, at the end of the verse it talks about the revelation of Jesus Christ. He also talks about it in chapter 4, I think it's verse 13, yes the revelation of His glory, speaking of Christ. This is the Second Coming. He is saying you have an obligation as a Christian who has received the great and gracious salvation of God to fix your mind and heart on the grace to be revealed at the coming of Jesus Christ. In other words, you're to live in the light of the Second Coming. Your hope is to look to Christ's second appearing when He comes to reward and glorify His people, the day when the whole redemptive work that has begun will be completed, the culmination of our salvation. Paul calls it in Romans 8 the redemption of our body, the glorious manifestation of the children of God when it is made manifest who we are. John says, "Beloved, it does not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when He shall appear at the apokalupsis, at the unveiling, then it will appear what we are and we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." So he says you are to live in the hope of the coming of Christ and the completion of your salvation.

Paul refers to that so beautifully in Titus chapter 2. It says, "The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men." But it doesn't end there, verse 13, "We are looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." Salvation phase one, has appeared, salvation phase two in the ultimate sense we still look for. So the first responsibility we have as those who have received the great gift of salvation is to look ahead to the coming of Christ.

Let me ask you an honest question. Do you do that? Be honest. Do you really do that? He doesn't say fix your eyes on the event. Wow, what an event! You hear people do that all the time. Wow, imagine what it's going to be like! Lights and the sky is opening and judgment and all those things. He doesn't say fix your attention on the event. In this passage he doesn't even say fix your attention on Christ. He doesn't say fix your attention on the glorious reward you'll receive. He doesn't say fix your attention on your perfection. Imagine, you'll be perfect. He doesn't say fix your attention on heaven...oh, won't it be fabulous? No. I love this, he says, "Fix your hope completely on...listen to it...the grace." Did you get that? The grace being brought to you. Are you ready for this? Do you want to know something? When you initially came to faith in Jesus Christ it was all of God's grace, was it not? All of God's grace. You want to know something else? In the day that Jesus Christ

comes and glorifies you and gives you heaven and perfection and eternal life in His presence, it will just then be as it was the first time, it will be all of grace. That's his point.

Are we prone to imagine that God owes us our final glory because of something we've done in our Christian life? Do we think for some moment that Christ will come to give us what we have rightly earned by our spirituality? Are we under the illusion that our final glory and final inheritance is ours by right, by earning, by worthiness? Don't be mistaken. When you first came to receive the salvation of your soul, you didn't deserve it, you didn't earn it, you had no right to it, you weren't worthy of it. It was purely a gift of grace. And, beloved, it won't be any different in that day either, it will be of grace because you won't be worthy of it then either and neither will I. It will be unmerited blessing then as it was when we were saved. It will be undeserved kindness as it was when we were saved. Think of it. We will no more deserve the redemption of these sinful bodies that are so polluted by iniquity than we deserved the redemption of our polluted souls. We will no more deserve our home in heaven than we deserve our place in the church. We will no more deserve the eternal weight of glory than we deserve the indwelling Spirit of glory. We will no more deserve sinless perfection of body and soul forever than we deserved forgiveness of sin in this body and soul. We will no more deserve unhindered, unbroken, sweet intimate communion with the living Lord than we deserve to be able to pray to Him now. It is grace and it always will be grace. No man can save Himself. No man can keep himself saved. And no man can earn his ultimate salvation glory..."For by grace are you saved, that's not...what?...of yourselves," and that embraces all of salvation.

So, Peter says, "Look, God is worthy of a fixed hope and when you think about God and you fix your hope on the eternal inheritance, remember what it is, it is all of...what?...grace." That will give you a grateful heart. You owe God that. That honors Him. That gives Him all the glory for you'll be no more worthy then than you were when He saved you. So live in anticipation of the fullness of grace.

Let me come at it another way. Is the experience of grace in your life a thrilling thing? It is for me, to just think about the fact that out of all the world God by His own sovereign plan decided to be gracious to me...grace upon grace poured out to me, all my sins forgiven, continually being forgiven, the granting of the Holy Spirit, the giving of the Word of God, the call to spiritual ministry, the joyous celebration of being a part of the redeemed assembly and enjoying the rich communion of the saints, seeing the world, as it were, through different eyes as the handiwork of the God whom I love and who loves me in a personal way. Grace upon grace, grace is the sweetest richest most wonderful thing there is a for a person to ever experience. So when you look to the day of the coming of Christ, don't look to the event so much and don't look to the personal glory, look to the grace that will be the sweetest part of all. And you'll have grace unmitigated forever and ever.

Just a footnote. He uses that present-tense verb "is being brought," it could be seen as a future by implication because often the Greeks when they wanted to say something in the future was so certain that it would surely come to pass they said it in the present as if it was already happening.

And that's kind of the idea here. It's on the idea already, you can believe God for it. So we're to believe God for the future grace to be granted when Jesus comes for us, that is the grace of our full salvation. That's such a good perspective to have, just keep looking for grace, more grace and the fullness of grace when the Lord gives us the inheritance that He has promised us and that gives all the glory to God.

Now somebody says, "How do we do that? How do we just fix our hope completely on that grace that is coming? How do you live in the light of that?" All right, let's go back to the verse and find out. The main verb is "fix your hope." But there are two participles. Participles in the Greek always modify the main verb. And so here we look at these participles that modify the main verb and they come at the first of the verse, "Gird your minds for action and keep sober," that's how you fix your hope, they modify the main verb.

Now here's how you do it. First of all, let's look at gird your mind for action. Again, this is a very strong thought here, gird your mind. You say, "What does that mean? That's kind of a strange phrase." Gird could be belt, cinch up, tie down your mind for action. It really simply means to tie something that's loose. And particularly in ancient times was used to refer to gathering up your robe. You know enough about ancient times to know that people wore flowing robes, lots of material. And if you wanted to move in a hurry you didn't just go moving with your robe flying all over everywhere. So you had some kind of a sash or belt and you cinched it down, and very often they would take the corners of the robe, pull them up through that sash making sort of a mini-robe so they could move rapidly. Back in Exodus chapter 12 you remember God had told His people that they were going to go out of Egypt and as they were preparing to leave Egypt and eating the Passover He says to them in Exodus 12:11, "Now you shall eat it in this manner with your loins girded and your sandals on your feet." In other words, you are ready to move, you're ready to go. That's the idea. Fix your hope on the grace that is to come to unfold your eternal inheritance and at any moment you are ready to go. Do you see it? You're ready to move. Nothing here holds you. I mean, you're eating but your staff is in your hand and your shoes are on and your robe is pulled up and you are ready to leave just like the Jews were ready to leave Egypt when the Lord moved.

Peter applies it metaphorically to the mind. He's not saying, you know, get your pajamas on and sit on the roof and hope for the Rapture. That's not the idea. He's saying get your priorities right, get your mind screwed down, let nothing hinder your mind as you fix on that hope, prepare your mind to come out cleanly from the clutter of life's circumstances. Get yourself disentangled from the hindrances of this world and devote yourself in a clear-cut fashion to live in the light of the grace to come at Christ's return. To put it simply, mean business with God.

Paul uses the same metaphor exactly in Ephesians 6:14 where he talks about the belt of truth it says in the Authorized Version. Actually the Greek could be translated the belt of truthfulness. And when a Roman soldier went out to battle the first thing he'd do is put his belt on and tie up his robe so he

didn't have his robe flying around everywhere and he could be killed in hand-to-hand combat. Pull that robe together which was saying I'm serious about battle. I'm going into this battle dead serious. I'm pulling in all the loose ends, I'm tying down everything that isn't tied down. Peter says do that with your mind. Get your mind tied down. And he doesn't mean just the intellect. He's talking about the whole matter of spiritual and mental attitude. Decisively make up your mind to bring every thought captive to the reality of the grace that is coming in the return of Christ.

Frankly, folks, I just don't think we live that way. I think we are so in to this world that the thought of the coming of Christ would be somewhat distressing to us. Don't let your thoughts and purposes and decisions just sort of hang loose and blow with the breeze, get it all tied down. Make a decisive life commitment to live in the reality of the grace that is to come. Paul said it this way in Colossians 3 in verse 2, "Set your affections on things...where?...above and not on things on the earth." Boy, that's direct stuff. Do you live that way?

Look at the second participle. First he says tie down the loose ends of your mind so that you can concentrate on the hope that is in the grace to come, and secondly, keeping sober...keeping sober. You could translate girding as a modifying way of translating it and keeping sober. Now nepho means literally not to get drunk, but metaphorically it means not to be intoxicated by the world. Sober mindedness is the idea of spiritual steadfastness, of spiritual self-control, of clarity of mind, of being in charge of your priorities, of having discipline of heart, discipline of mind, balanced life that is not intoxicated with the various allurements of the world around you. It is a well disciplined life. So he says...Look, tie down your mind and live a disciplined life. It's a marvelous thought. Moral decisiveness, constant mental alertness, self-control rather than the reckless irresponsible self-indulgence that characterizes so much of the world. Fix your hope on God. Pull everything in and make it captive to Christ, as Paul said to the Corinthians.

In response to what God has given you in a great salvation, shouldn't you live in constant anticipation and hope of the grace that is to come? Or have you forgotten how sweet the grace is? Have you been a Christian so long that that grace has lost its sweetness to you? Be honest. Would the coming of Jesus Christ if you knew it were going to happen tomorrow be an intrusion into your life? Would it mess up your plans? We become so worldly in our affections, so worldly in our interests that I believe if we were honest we hope Christ doesn't show up for a long time. And it isn't even necessarily because we've got some things that are sinful, it's just that we don't want to have the plans messed up. I mean, we've got this big trip, we've been saving a long...we got a new house, we're going to get a new car. I mean, don't come till after the World Series, Lord, we've got tickets. That's how we live life. I believe that most Christians living in our culture, frankly, or most people who claim to be Christians would find that really thinking about the coming of Christ would be something that would be an intrusion into their plans. Not the way it is with some of the people I visited with these past couple of months, sitting in a poor hovel with hardly enough to exist and longing with all their hearts for Jesus Christ to come and take them to Himself. We get so engulfed in the world.

And so, Peter says will you disentangle your minds from that and will you get your focus right? If you have lost the sense of overwhelming joy about how wonderful your salvation is, if fellowship with anyone here on this earth is more desirable to you than fellowship with Christ, if you would rather stay on earth than be in Christ's glorious home in heaven, then you don't love His appearing. You haven't girded up your mind. You haven't set your priorities. You haven't fixed your hope on the glorious grace that God has promised you and that's probably because you've taken the grace you've already experienced for granted and you've allowed yourself to become cold to its wonders. John, bless him, the Apostle on Patmos in exile, all alone, writing the book of Revelation, all about the coming of Christ and at the end he says, "Even so...what?...come, Lord Jesus, don't delay." That's the perspective. If we're really grateful for the salvation God has given us, if the salvation grace He has given us is the richest most precious possession we have, then we will live in the hope of the fullness of that salvation yet to come from His grace. And He is worthy of that kind of fixed hope.

Don't you think it grieves His heart when we would wish Him not to come so we can fulfill our plans? Don't you think it grieves Him when we don't live in the constant anticipation of His glorious presence who has been so gracious to us and who wants to pour out grace upon grace upon grace forever and we are more interested in the mundane passing trash of the world? Come to grips with where your heart is on this. Hope is an obligation for the believer toward God because of His gift of great salvation.

The second one is holiness...holiness...holiness. Verse 14, "As obedient children, do not be 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 behavior because it's written, you shall be holy for I am holy." Second obligation is holiness. And may I suggest to you that hope produces holiness? First John 3:3, "He that hath this hope in him..." do you know the rest of the verse?...purifies himself." You live in hope, you live in holiness. You live every moment with your mind captive, fixed on the grace that is to come, anticipating the return of Christ and all that that means and if that's the focus and the longing and the love and the anticipation of your life it's going to produce holiness. And holiness is our second obligation.

The key thought, the main verb is in verse 15, be holy yourselves...be holy yourselves. That's the main thought. But there's some background to that. Look at verse 14, it opens, "As obedient children." Literally this is a marvelous statement in the Greek, it's actual way of translation should be as children of obedience...as children of obedience. It's not so much that obedience is an adjective to modify children as that obedience is the mother of the children. It is that you are born of obedience, you derive your character from obedience, you derive your nature from obedience. Obedience is the parent whose image you bear. This particular phrase and use of the genitive is not uncommon in the writings of Paul as here in Peter's case. In Ephesians chapter 2 it says in verse 2 that unbelievers are the children of disobedience. In other words, they bear disobedience in their nature. They are

characterized as disobedient. The parent whose image they bear is disobedience. But here he says your nature is obedience. That's the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. You can always tell the difference. The character of a non-Christian is disobedience to God, the character of a Christian is obedience, it couldn't be clearer than that. He's saying since you are the children of obedience by nature, since that's the essence of your inherent character, since obedience is the pattern of your life, not incidental quality, since obedience is a pre-determined gift of God through your election, Ephesians 2:10 you are ordained unto good works, that's how you ought to live. That's the point. You came to Christ, Paul says, through the obedience of faith and then in Romans 6 he says you yield yourself to Him as obedient servants. Obedience characterizes your life. The point here is that a Christian is characterized by obedience to God, that's the mark of a believer. And he says since that is your pattern it certainly makes sense for you to be holy.

Now you say, "Well if obedience is our pattern, do we ever disobey?" Yes, but obedience is our pattern. But disobedience breaks the pattern. And so he has to call even those who by nature are obedient to be holy because that obedient nature is incarcerated in the flesh where there is sin. But it's important for us to recognize that what Peter is saying is be consistent with your nature and your truest self is obedient.

So since you're obedient children or literally the children of obedience, be ye holy yourselves...that's the main verb. Fix your hope and be holy in all your behavior, in every area of life. Now we've covered the subject of holiness, I don't want to belabor the point because I want to move on a little bit, but he's saying be pure, be clean, be righteous, be sinless, be separate from defilement, cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh as 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, perfecting holiness. Ephesians, you know, that marvelous two verses that begin chapter 5, "Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love as Christ also loved you." In other words, be like the one whose image you bear.

And the question comes, how can you do it? The first obligation was hope, how can you do it? Gird up your mind and be sober, get your priorities right, extricate yourself from the entanglements of the world and tie yourself down captive to Christ and focus on the grace to come. But what about this holiness? How do you do that? How do you get to that point? Well this main verb also has some participles modifying it too. Peter is very consistent as he writes. Here's how, verse 14, "By not being conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance." Don't act like you used to. Simple enough. Don't act like you did when you were children of disobedience. The word "conformed" by the way means to fashion yourself. Or if you took it in the passive, to be fashioned. It's the identical word used in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world." It's the same word, almost the same phraseology, very possibly Peter and Paul not only by inspiration of the Holy Spirit but by fellowship together came to this same understanding. He says make a complete break with your former life, you'll never be holy till you break with the former life.

He even mentions that. Look at verse 14, "Do not be conformed to the former lusts," epithumia, passionate desires, evil longings, appetites, sensuous impulses that propel the unregenerate people. In 1 Thessalonians 4:4 and 5 Paul says, "Don't act like the godless heathen who don't know God." Don't do that. Don't behave like you did, he says, in your ignorance before you were saved when you knew not God. He could be talking to Jews for they had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge, they were ignorant. He could be talking to Gentiles because they were in darkness and ignorance, according to Ephesians 4:17 to 19, their minds were darkened and they were ignorant of the truth of God. But he's definitely in both cases, whether Jew or Gentile, talking about a time before you were saved, he says don't act like you did before you were saved, don't be driven by lusts as you were before you were saved. You're not longer ignorant lusters, you're children of obedience, you're transformed so act like it, behave that way.

He uses that same thought, does the Holy Spirit, inspiring Paul in Ephesians 4 in a wonderful section starting in verse 20 he says, "You did not learn Christ in this way if indeed you have heard Him and been taught in Him just as the truth is in Jesus, that in reference to your former manner of life you laid aside the old self which is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit and you're being renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new self which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." I believe he's defining there the new nature, it's different, it's righteous, it's holy. He says the same things, does Paul, in Colossians chapter 3, I think it's verses 9 and 10, yes, he says, "Don't lie to one another since you've laid aside the old self and you've put on the new self." You're totally different, you're a child of obedience and so you don't act the way you used to act.

So how can I be holy? By not allowing myself to be fashioned according to the scheme of my former lusts which were part of my unredeemed ignorance. I make a break with the past.

And then comes the standard of holiness, so wonderful. The standard of holiness, verse 15, "But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior." Oh what a great thought. Like the Holy One who called you be holy. Who is the Holy One who called us? God...God. The negative is...don't act like you used to act. The positive is...act like God. Pretty simple, isn't it?

How can I live a fixed hope? You've got to get your mind in harness and you've got to sober up and stay mentally and spiritually alert. How can I be holy? Stop doing that that you used to do and start doing what God does. Stop being like you were when you were in your unredeemed ignorance and start being like the one who redeemed you. God didn't set the standard, God is the standard. Matthew 5:48, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Ephesians 5:1, "Be imitators of God." God is holy, without sin, you be holy, too. First Samuel 2:2 says, "There is no one holy like the Lord." That's a high standard. And we cannot be, listen to this, as holy as God is but we can be holy because God is. We cannot be holy to the extent that God is, but we can have the same kind of

purity that God has, smaller measure. Not like His in extent but certainly like His in kind. After all, He's the one, He says, who called you...He called you. That's, by the way, an effectual call, every reference to the call to salvation in the epistles of the New Testament is an effectual saving call as a result of the sovereign work of God. It is an effectual call to salvation, the very God who called you to salvation, who called you to be His child of obedience, who called you to be holy you're to be like. You're to be like Him.

Now this is so very very basic. It says in Ephesians 1:4 that He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him. Chose us for that. So we're called to holiness.

And then verse 16 says, "Because it's written you shall be holy for I am holy." You shall be holy for I am holy. This is the principle. You're to be like God because God said so. Peter says you be holy in all your behavior. And somebody says why? And Peter says because it's written, it says so. Where, Peter? In Scripture. God said so.

Now I don't want you to leave me, give me just another five minutes and I'm going to show you something really exciting. Where does it say that...you shall be holy for I am holy? Well it's written. Where is it written? Let's go to Leviticus chapter 11, let me show you something. This is so practical, Leviticus 11 verse 44, now I want you to stay there with me a minute, now this is really really helpful. Leviticus 11:44 says this, "For I am the Lord your God," and He's giving His laws to His people here, "Consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy...why, what's the reason?...for I am holy...for I am holy." Verse 45, "I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God thus you shall be holy for I am holy," I'm your God, you're My people, I'm holy, you be holy. And again it's not so much that we are to be holy for our sake, we're to be holy for His sake because we're identified as His children. It's not so much that we are to hope for what it does for us, we're to hope for how it glorifies Him.

Now look at chapter 18 and I will show you something that may shock you. Starting in chapter 18 the Lord really starts laying out laws and I want you to follow carefully. He gives laws, and laws and laws and look what He says all the way through, there's a motive to obey Him, here it comes, verse 2, "I am the Lord your God." Look at verse 4, "You're to perform My judgments, keep My statutes, live in accord with them." Why? "I'm the Lord your God." Verse 5, "So shall you keep My statutes, My judgments by which a man may live if he does them." Why? "Because I am the Lord." Verse 6, "None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness," that is you don't have a sexual relationship with a relative. Why? "I'm the Lord." Verse 30, "You're to keep My charge, don't practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you so as not to defy yourselves with harm." Why? "Because I am the Lord your God and I don't want to be identified with that." Do you understand who you're connected to?

Look at verse 2 of chapter 19, "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy...why?...for I the Lord your God am holy." And if you're going to be associated with Me, I demand holiness. Verse 3, "Everyone of you shall reverence his mother and his father and keep My Sabbaths...why?...I'm the Lord your God. And do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods...why?...I'm the Lord your God." Look at verse 10, "Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard, you shall leave them for the needy and the stranger...why?...I'm the Lord your God." I don't want to be identified with your violations. Verse 12, "Don't ever swear falsely by My name so as to profane the name of your God...why?...I'm the Lord." Verse 14, "Don't curse a deaf man nor place a stumbling block before the blind but you shall revere your God, I'm the Lord." And the end of verse 16, "I'm the Lord," end of verse 18, "I am the Lord," verse 25, "I am the Lord your God," verse 28, "I am the Lord," verse 30, "I am the Lord," verse 32, "I am the Lord," verse 34, "I am the Lord your God," verse 36, "I'm the Lord your God," verse 37, "I am the Lord." Chapter 20 verse 7, "You better consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy...why?...I'm the Lord your God."

You say, "Are these people deaf? What is going on here?" Verse 8, "Keep My statutes, practice them...why?...I'm the Lord who sanctifies you." Verse 24, "I'm the Lord your God who separated you from the peoples," verse 26, "You're to be holy to Me for I the Lord am holy and I've set you apart from the peoples to be Mine and I don't want to be identified with an unholy people." Listen, beloved, you owe God holiness. Do you see it? After all He's done for you and me and the great salvation He's given to us. Even as the great calling was given to this nation, verse 6 of chapter 21, "They shall be holy to their God, not profane the name of their God, so they shall be holy," the end of the verse. Verse 7, "He is holy to his God." Verse 8, "For I the Lord who sanctify you am holy." Verse 12, "I am the Lord." Verse 15, "I am the Lord who sanctifies you." Verse 23, "I am the Lord who sanctifies you." Then chapter 22 verse 2, "Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy gifts of the sons of Israel which they dedicate to Me so as not to profane My holy name." Why? "I am the Lord." And I don't want to take the time, folks, but it goes on from there.

What then becomes the dominant compelling reason for holiness? What is it? It is our association with a holy God. That's the compulsion. And if nothing else was clear in the book of Leviticus, that is...that is. Shall we not love our holy God enough, our holy God who graciously calls us to bear His image, who has made us children of obedience, shall we not love Him enough to be holy as He is holy?

Most of us feel pressured to be holy and the pressure comes from the church, Christian friends, or the fear of chastening, or the fear of judgment. He says you ought to want to be holy because the God who has identified Himself with you in grace is holy and He's worthy of holy children. Do you see that? What a lofty calling.

And then finally, just to mention it. The third responsibility we have to God is honor...honor. Verse 17 says, and I'll just introduce this, "If you address as Father and you do...by the way...if you address as Father the one who impartially judges according to every man's work, then conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." Again here's the main verb, "conduct yourselves in fear...conduct yourselves in fear." Fear, what does that mean? Reverence, awe, respect, honor. First he says fix your hope, then he says be holy, then he says live your life in honor to God...honor Him...honor Him...fear Him...reverence Him...have a holy awe. And I love the way he sets this up. He says, "If you address as Father..." Do we address God as Father? Sure, Jesus said when you pray, pray like this, "Our...what?...Father." You can call Him Father. Galatians 4:6 Paul says, "Call Him Abba Father," papa, daddy, intimate, loving close. And so Peter says, "Look, if you're so close to God and you've got this intimate relationship with God and you can call Him Father, then you must also know that you are talking to one who impartially judges according to every man's work and you better conduct your life with fear. If you're that close to God then you know full well that He is that close to you and He judges according to a man's work and He will deal with your sins so you better be careful how you live your life. That's the idea.

Do you have honor for God? Do you respect His holiness? Oh we plunge into His presence...Father, Father, Father...but do we forget that the one with whom we intimately commune as Father is also the impartial judge who will deal with every person even believers according to their sin in the sense that He will chasten us? Read it in Hebrews chapter 12, every son He loves He also...what?...chastens. And before you go waltzing into your communion you better stop and realize that you must go with great honor for the God who is not only your Father but is your judge even as a believer. Not that He will eternally condemn you but that He will deal with your sin.

To put it this way, the more the Christian knows God intimately the more he fears God. And the more he fears God the more he fears to offend God and the more he longs to honor Him. It's a profound thought. If you're so intimate with God that you can call Him Father, then you must know that He's going to judge sin so you should live in a healthy fear of God. He's not an indulgent Santa Claus and He's not like Eli the priest of the Old Testament. It's very compelling words.

We have an obligation to our great God, beloved, to live before Him in hope and holiness and in honor. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, we think of those next two verses that say we were redeemed with the precious blood of a Lamb unblemished and spotless, not with perishable things like silver and gold. When we realized the price You paid to redeem us, when we realized the inheritance You have promised us, when we realized the grace You have freely bestowed upon us, our hearts are bound and we long to give You back hope, living longingly for Your grace that will be revealed to us at the coming of Christ. And we live longing to be holy as You are holy because You're our God and we belong to You and You to us

and we bear Your name and we bear Your image and we long to honor You. For even though we draw near in intimacy and call You Father, we know You're the judge and we don't come in irreverence, we come with great respect into Your presence. Help us to live, Lord, fulfilling by the power of the Spirit in us the proper response...hope, holiness and honor. And, Lord, if it's at all to be true of our lives, it will be true because the very hand that points us in that direction is the hand that strengthens us to accomplish it, even Your own gracious hand. So be gracious to us, Lord, strengthen us that we might rightly respond to the great salvation You have given us in Christ. We pray in His name. Amen.

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