

Patience: Hopeful Living

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 July 2024

Preacher: Steven Randall

[0 : 00] Are you different? Do you wish to stand out from the crowd?

Do you seek to blend in? Or do you want to be distinct from everyone else? I remember when I was a teenager in high school or anywhere else, I would always try to blend in with the crowd.

Generally speaking, standing out for whatever reason was a bad thing. It meant that you were either weird, had done something wrong, and generally attention was a bad thing.

I generally used to hate it. But I wonder how you found that. I wonder how comfortable you felt with standing out from the crowd. As we come to this portion of 1 Peter, it could be said that it is all about being distinct in light of what Peter previously wrote.

We find that we are called to what many of us might find uncomfortable. In this passage, we see that as we press on in our journey to the new creation, we are urged to live in light of the hope we have in Christ by living in contrast to our former lives and aspiring to Christ's likeness by living in hope, holiness, and reverence to our God.

[1 : 26] Peter calls Christians to three things in this section, which is what we shall consider one by one. In verse 13, he calls Christians to be a hopeful people.

Secondly, in verses 14 to 16, he calls them to be a holy people. And finally, in verses 17 to 21, he calls them to be a reverent people.

So firstly, in verse 13, we are called to be a hopeful people. Verse 13, Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.

And at the beginning of this section, we read, Therefore. So it is important to understand what came before this section, as this is Peter's conclusions based upon what he wrote previously.

Peter, at the start of his letter, begins with doxology and praise. Verse 3, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why?

[2 : 37] Because in him, we have been born again to an indestructible inheritance, which, though we go through various trials here and now, this inheritance is secure for us in heaven, where our faith and hope will be completed when Jesus Christ comes again.

And it is on the note of this marvelous salvation, which is secure for us, and in which we can find joy that Peter picks up on in verse 13.

And this is what we see in our passage. Verse 13, We set our hope on what? On the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.

We are commanded to hope in the salvation which is guaranteed for us when Christ returns. In verse 13, we also find the manner in which we are to hope.

Read verse 13, With minds that are alert and fully sober. With minds that are alert. Commentators suggest this would be the equivalent to the modern phrase of its time to roll up the sleeves.

[3 : 50] Generally, when you're doing cleaning or gardening, you don't just sit back and relax. No, you roll up your sleeves and you get to work. It is also thought that this is a subtle allusion to Exodus chapter 12, verse 11, where before the Exodus, the people of Israel were to show similar preparedness for the Exodus, which would lead them to their own wilderness journey towards the promised land.

It was to be done in preparedness, not in idleness. As we embark upon our journey towards our heavenly inheritance, as after being saved from slavery to sin, it is important, we hope, not in idleness, but in readiness for action.

We also see in verse 13 that we are to hope with sober-mindedness. We are to be focused on the hope that we have in Christ, and we are not to allow ourselves to be distracted by this world.

Though we may not be able to pinpoint the exact historical circumstances of the recipients of this letter, we know that they faced persecutions and pressures from their culture around them. They faced many threats to their hope precisely because of the hope they had. And the command here is to be focused on their hope, despite all these pressures.

[5 : 27] Thinking about today, I wonder how many pressures we have that would distract us from our hope. We place our faith in Christ, and we know that our hope in life and death is Him alone, and in the final resurrection, but this can so often be hard to hold to.

Amidst the world where there is so much evil, suffering, trials, and affliction, and instability and violence, perhaps we face pressures from the world around us.

Maybe we face pressure from those who would trash on our hope, and pressure us to live in such a way that would make us conform and neglect our hope.

Whatever it is, Peter exhorts us to stay focused. We are to stay focused. We are to be sober-minded.

In a world where our brains are fed with that which is untrue, not noble, wrong, impure, disgusting, and that which is worthy of condemnation, we are called to stay focused on the hope we have in Christ.

[6 : 50] Christian, you are not supposed to set your mind on that which would distract from your hope. You are not to focus your mind on that which would take you away from this great hope.

If you allow your minds to be filled with spiritual junk, then we should not be surprised when your hope seems less tenable each day. Instead, you ought to fill your mind with that which is true, with that which is noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, and praiseworthy as you anticipate the day when Christ returns.

And as you stay focused on the hope that you have in Christ, you also ought to be careful concerning other hopes. As a culture, we hope in many things.

We may hope in scientific advancement. We may hope in certain political figures. Or maybe we just hope that things will eventually get better. I wonder what you hope in this morning.

Maybe it's something that is a good thing, or maybe it's something that we ought not to get ourselves embroiled in. Friends, regarding our eternal salvation, regarding our eternal salvation and spiritual satisfaction, we ought only to look to Christ for salvation and spiritual satisfaction.

[8 : 26] Not all these other competitors which would threaten to rob us of hope. And of course, it is easy being caught up in this world to be distracted and to set our hope on worldly things, but the message here is that we ought to stay focused on the eternal hope which has stood the test of time, which lifts our eyes beyond the beckoning grave to see the matchless beauty of a day design.

In this verse, we also see that we are to have an undivided hope. The ESV brings this out clearer than the NIV where it says that you are to set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

You see, you cannot one day hope in Christ and then the next day in a political figure. You cannot hope in eternal salvation only when it suits you and then hope in technology for our satisfaction and spiritual well-being.

Friends, we are called here to hope fully on the grace that is to come. And let me ask you, do you wait with an undivided hope?

Or are you prone to be distracted by many other things? At this point in his letter, Peter is about to focus on many of the ethical implications of our salvation and it is no accident that he begins here with hope.

[10 : 11] before we live our lives to the Lord, we must do so in the context of his grace. It is why it is important as we continue our journey that we focus on the hope that we have in him.

For many of us at different times, this may be a struggle. But regardless of how you feel, you can have assurance that your hope is certain.

Let us not focus on what would overwhelm us. No, let Peter bring us back to the gospel where we see that our salvation is secure.

And how much of a difference this makes to our lives. I remember at a family funeral a few years ago. The hope we had in eternal life struck many of those who were there who were not Christians. It does make a difference. People do take notice. Friends, part of living in light of the hope that we have is by setting our hearts and our minds upon it and not losing sight of what awaits us in the end.

[11 : 34] we are a hopeful people. And in verses 14 to 16, we see that we are to be a holy people.

Verse 14, as obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But, just as he who has called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. before we see the command to be holy, we see that we are obedient children. We are those who have been born again and who have been made children of God.

And it is important to understand that this is the context in which we strive to be holy. We do not strive to be holy in order to become obedient children, but rather we are already, we have been already been made obedient children that we strive towards holiness.

For the believer, our works must stem from the reality of the gospel. we are commanded to be holy, but before this command, we find that this involves a negative as well as a positive.

[13:00] In verse 14, we are told do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. And in chapter 4, verse 3, Peter describes what this may have looked like.

In chapter 4, verse 3, he says, for you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do, living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry. And it is in this background, which Peter was writing to, that they are commanded to be distinct from all of this. Peter calls them to not be conformed to this world's way of thinking and living.

Instead, they are to be holy. They are to strive to be like the one who called them. Verse 15, but just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.

The call here is one to live in a way that is distinct from their surrounding culture, something which Peter often calls his readers to, and instead they are to imitate their God.

[14:25] Perhaps you have had role models in your life. Perhaps this is a parent, maybe a teacher, maybe it is an older Christian, or maybe it's a celebrity. I'm sure whoever it is, most of us have had someone who we have looked up to, admired, and have tried to imitate.

And the command here to be holy and imitate God is similar except that God is far greater than anyone that we could look up to. He is all-sufficient in himself.

He is perfect, both in power and majesty and in his moral purity. And at this point I would like to ask, how much like God are you?

we read the Ten Commandments earlier, which reflect his character, and I wonder how much of your life matches up to this standard.

Do you reflect your maker? Do you strive to be more like him every day? And notice that we are to strive to be like him in all aspects of our life.

[15:39] Verse 15, so be holy, in all you do. Holiness is a whole life deal. We do not get to pick and choose which aspects of our life we are holy.

You know, I've had people speak to me and tell me that they follow Christ, but when it comes to particular areas in their life, they're not going to follow Jesus in those bits.

I'm going to follow Christ in all aspects of my life, well, maybe except my finances. I'm going to devote my life to God, but I think I'll retain control over how I spend my time.

And I wonder, are there any areas which you are struggling to devote your life to Christ in? Friends, Peter leaves no room for this kind of attitude.

In all you do, he says, this is what you are called to. You are to be like him in every area of your life. Peter cites Scripture in order to build his point.

[16:51] In verse 16, for it is written, be holy, because I am holy. It is not entirely certain what text he is quoting.

If you have an NIV, it will list in the footnote three potential and possible texts, but in either case, what is being referenced here is the holiness code for Israel.

For the Israelites, they had been redeemed and set free to worship God as his people, and because of this, this meant that they had to be different from the surrounding cultures. This meant they had cleanliness laws, food laws, and other civic moral obligations.

And what Peter is saying here is, while we may not follow all of the ceremonial laws, the same principle applies. The same principle at work.

As God's people, you are to be distinct to him. This means that your lifestyle must be different to that of your former life. And if you've been a Christian for as long as you can remember, then it means that your lifestyle must be different from that of the surrounding culture.

[18:09] Because as obedient children, you have been made holy in his sight. In verse two, we see that you have been called by the one through the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

Are you distinct from the culture around you? Is there a noticeable difference that knowing Christ brings to your life? If you took your daily routines, your words, and your thoughts, I wonder how different they would be if you were not a Christian.

the reality is that reading these verses may prove difficult for those of us, for many of us, including myself. It may be said that there are many in the church who in fact do not look very different from the non-believing world around us.

In fact, even whole denominations would fit this description. Perhaps you talk in the same ways. Perhaps you may live very similar lifestyles and conduct yourselves in a similar manner to those who do not know Christ.

Now, I'm not saying that we must remove ourselves so far from those who do not know Christ. I am not saying that we must completely withdraw from anyone else, that we cannot relate to those who are not Christians.

[19 : 35] But what I am saying here is that the Christian is called to live a distinct lifestyle, not following this world's ways of thinking and living, but imitating God in all that we do.

We must be like Him, and we must not be afraid to be different from those who we live our lives with who do not know the Lord. we are to be a hopeful people, we are to be a holy people, and finally, in verses 17 to 21, we are to be irreverent people.

Notice that in verse 17, Peter begins in the same place as he does in verse 14. He refers to his readers again as children of God, since you call on a father.

This is the reality for anyone who has been born again, that God is our father. This is how our Lord taught us to pray, our father in heaven.

And it is in this identity that we consider this command as the children of the almighty judge of heaven and earth. And in verse 17, we read the next command, which is to live in reverent fear.

[21 : 08] Verse 17, since you call on a father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

Not only do we see who we are in these verses, but we also see that it is important to understand who God is. He is the impartial judge. This is similar to what our Lord taught us in Matthew chapter 12, verse 36, where he says, but I tell you that everyone will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken.

For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. And throughout the Old Testament, and even the New, we find that God makes it abundantly clear that just because his people know him, that does not mean they are above him or are excused from his holy law.

So, knowing that God is the impartial judge, and that just because we are his people does not mean that we are above his law, we are commanded to live in reverent fear.

As many commentators point out, this is no paralyzing terror, but rather it is a deep reverence, a deep respect, which spurs us on to act like who we are under our triune God.

[22 : 40] Thomas Schreiner puts it rather helpfully. He says, there is a kind of terror that does not contradict confidence. A confident driver also possesses a healthy fear of an accident that prevents him or her from doing anything foolish.

And what is in view here is as we go on our journey as foreigners, as we continue our pilgrimage traveling towards our inheritance, we cannot abuse the grace that God has given us.

This would be to entirely misunderstand what God has done for us. We must live like we have been saved. we must live like who we are, which is obedient children of our Father in heaven.

Living in irreverence, thinking that we can now sin as we please, would be, as C.S. Lewis puts it, to act as children playing with mud pies while holiday at the sea is offered to us.

Friends, knowing Jesus gives you no license to sin. when Paul was confronted with a similar problem, shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

[23 : 56] What does he say? By no means. Instead, we live in view of the final judgment, confident in our salvation because of this we strive to live in obedience to our Father in heaven.

We seek to follow His laws and be holy. to Him. And Peter gives us a reason to live in fear.

It is because you have been redeemed to a secure salvation. Verse 18, for you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish or defect.

Christians, you have been redeemed. You have been redeemed, and there are two images generated here. First is that in the ancient world where slaves would be set free from their masters after money had been paid to secure their release.

Exodus, however, perhaps the more prominent image here is that of the Exodus, where God redeemed Israel from their slavery in Egypt, and their whole wilderness journey is set in this context that they have been redeemed by their God.

[25 : 32] However, the redemption that is enjoyed by Christians is far greater than all of these. no, it was not with perishable things that they were redeemed.

No, it was with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. And this generates to us images of Christ's sufferings.

He who was sinless and spotless, who died for the transgressions of many, he who was marred beyond human likeness or appearance, and he was despised and rejected by mankind.

Friends, this was for you. He bore pain more imaginable than anything we could bear or imagine, and he did so for you.

how great a salvation that we have. He did this so that you may have eternal life. And when you consider this great redemption that we have, aren't you not moved to love your God more?

[26 : 50] Don't you not want to live in obedience to him? Robert Layton, a Scottish theologian, once said, the more a Christian believes and loves and rejoices in the love of God, the more unwilling surely he is to displease him.

Don't you want to please your God? Does considering what he has done for you not move you to love him more and more?

And not only does Peter point us to the reconciling aspect of our redemption, but he also points us to the ethical dimensions of it. Not only have we been redeemed with a great price, but we have been redeemed from, verse 18, the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors. Many cultures in the ancient world would have held to their traditions firmly. They were highly valued, both their religious and ethical, moral ways of life.

And any departure from these would have been considered deeply offensive. But Peter says that they have been redeemed from all these things.

[28 : 08] That is, they have been brought into a new life despite the opposition and persecutions that they may receive from the surrounding culture. And this is what the atonement does.

It not only reconciles us to God, but it also brings to us moral transformation. Another Scot, George Smeaton, wrote that when Paul was writing about the death of Christ, it was his purpose to unite the atoning and sanctifying elements and to rescue believers from their unholiness.

In other words, Peter is saying that to live in reverence to God and to not follow and obey Him would be to entirely misunderstand our redemption.

Because we have been saved from this way of life to a new way of life that is marked by holiness and obedience to God. Friends, I do not know how you are feeling this morning.

You may feel close to God or perhaps you feel you are struggling with sin. We will all struggle with the battle against sin and sin is something that we must repent of.

[29 : 33] But we see here that not only do we start our Christian faith with the hope of glory, but friends, we must be brought back to it every day on a daily basis.

And friends, it is on this hope that Peter leaves us. Verse 20 to 21, we learn that we have been redeemed and that this redemption is eternally secure.

Verse 20, he was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

We are a hopeful people. We are a holy people. We are a reverent people, but none of this can ever be separated from the salvation that we have in our Redeemer, which has been purposed from before creation began, where we have been brought to know a certain hope in the one who was raised from the dead and who was glorified.

We end this morning in the same place that we began, in the hope that our Lord has bought for us. Christians, as we continue in our journey towards our inheritance, as we strive to be those who live in reverence and obedience to our God, we can be assured that the God who eternally purposed to save us will keep us secure until His plan is completed.

[31 : 18] It is in this hope, in this hope that we journey on until our faith is completed, when our Lord comes again in glory.

Amen. Let us pray. We use Anybody