

We will... Discern (1 Peter 1:13-16)

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[0 : 00] And good morning church. Years ago I read an article about a young boy, a young man who was 16 years old and wanted to get a driver's license and so he took the driver's test.

And in the car with him was the instructor and the examiner who was going to examine how well he drove, whether to grant him the privilege to have a driver's license or not.

And so on this test drive, this examination drive, the young man did all the technical things that was requested of him to earn his driver's license and he pulled into the examiner's office and upon returning the examiner said to him, hey, good job young man, you had a near perfect score, to which the young man was so relieved.

He had sweaty palms, his heart rate was up, he was anxious about how well he did and upon hearing he did a good job and likely he's going to pass, he said something that probably he should not have because he said, oh, I am just so thankful I don't have to drive like that all the time.

I fear sometimes that perhaps that's how many Christians are is we come to church, we put on a good face, we white knuckle doing good and then when we have a moment of relaxation and things we're not all that careful about our thought life and perhaps we're not all that careful about what forms of entertainment we have and how we relate to our spouse and our children and the goals that we have for our lives and these things and perhaps that story is not all together all that different but I pray it is because Christians are called to be a holy people when nobody is looking and so if you are new to with us this morning we are in the midst of a sermon series where we're working through different aspects of our member covenant and what's the member covenant?

[2 : 16] Our covenant is something that binds us as a people that we agree upon to say these are the ways that we agree we're going to relate to both the Lord and one another.

We're going to covenant together believing these things and on the resource board on the outside of this wall here in the hall you can find our member covenant.

It looks like a piece of paper like this and the second one and each Sunday we're going through one aspect of our member covenant. This week we find ourselves in the number two the second covenant aspect of our covenant that we statement that we say we're going to agree to and here's how it reads.

We will discern truth from error living wisely in this world denying ungodliness and fleshly passions keeping ourselves unstained from this world. We will strive to lead self-controlled upright holy lives being transformed through the renewing of the mind with sound doctrine.

So we're going to if you will covenant together as members of the body of Christ here who gather at fourth and say it is our ambition and desire to live holy lives and yes when no one is looking.

[3 : 36] And so we find ourselves today in the passage that Ed read earlier in 1 Peter chapter one verses 13 through 16.

And in the passage we come so we're after living holy lives and this passage is part of the it's in the first chapter of 1 Peter and there's this call to live a holy life and the first word in chapter third verse 13 chapter one is therefore and when we use the word therefore it's there for a reason.

So if I say and so I walked and therefore I walked my dog you're missing some understanding as to why I may have chosen to walk my dog and so you may be missing the fact that she was very she had been in the house for eight hours and she had been all alone and she had not seen anyone and so she had all this pent up energy and so when I came home therefore I walked the dog to release some of this energy.

So you miss the context of why I just said therefore and you hear so in this passage if you will Peter is saying therefore be holy but what is the basis for why he just asks us to be holy commanded us to be holy that's what we're missing and so what I want us to see first of all is that the call to

holiness is a response to salvation it's the response to what God has already done for us. If we look in chapter first Peter chapter one look with me back in verses three through five how the book opens how this letter opens Peter says blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled unfading kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

[5 : 45] Verses three through five it's clear this is what Christ has done for you by his great mercy he caused us verse three to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of what Christ has done on the cross after the what Christ has done on the cross raising from the dead so this call to holiness that begins with therefore what is the it's not just be holy it's in response to your salvation of what Christ has done for you be holy and why also say it's a response this call to be holy is a response to salvation and what Christ has done is also because of what follows our immediate text look with me we're reading we're going to be reading verses 13 through 16 but look with me in verse 17 and if you call so this is immediately following the text that this this call to holiness immediately following that text we read in verse 17 and if you call on him who is father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile knowing that you were ransomed from the feudal ways that you inherited from your forefathers not with perishable things such as silver and gold but you were ransomed with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot you were ransomed by the precious blood of Christ like a lamb without spot so get this context in chapter chapter 1 verse 13 is this through 16 is this call to be holy but notice what precedes that is I'm calling you to be holy because of what Christ has done for you and in case you forgot it after that passage it's because of what Christ has done for you your salvation a call to holiness is a call to holiness because it is a response to salvation what God has done for us it is not a baseless call can you imagine you're a single mom you worked all day you come home to teenage children you have worked you've woken up early you've cooked a meal you've gone off to work they went off to school you came together in the evening you cooked a meal you cleaned up the house you started the load of laundry and you've eaten a meal and you ask your teenage children hey kids could you just help me clear the table and do some dishes with me as we kind of clean up the kitchen and they say no it would be pretty hard to swallow for that mom who is labored and worked and so this call to clean up the kitchen that the mom has helped it has just asked her children to do is a response to all that she has done for them and they can't seem to do this one little thing that is being requested of them that's hard to swallow and it's kind of like that with regard to our holiness be holy I've done all of this for you I've done all of this for you be holy it's a response to what God has done for us so the verse continues verse 13 therefore be prepared or don't therefore preparing your minds for action be sober minded set your hope fully on the grace that has been brought to you by the revelation of Jesus

Christ so we have this holiness that must be focused on the return of Christ notice with me in the latter part of the verse set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ so the our our call to holiness is not only what God has done for us in the past for salvation but it's also what he will do also for us in the future this grace this mercy that will be bestowed upon saints in Christ when he returns and so the call to holiness is not only looking back at what Christ has done but looking forward to what he will do also so what does it require to be a holy people and we know what Christ has done for us for this unshakable hope of the Lord's return we look forward to that and it begins in our mind so notice it says preparing your minds for action the idea is to be mentally prepared for combat to action in the realm of your holiness holiness begins in our thought life what you think determines how you live I remember hiking on a trail we used to go camping up in the Alpine lakes and mountains high elevation and I remember hiking on a trail and it was a cliff face here and a cliff face there and there was a little goat trail here and my father was leading me this way and he he would say

Scott he had a hand I was a young boy I had a hand on his shirt in front of me and I had a hand on the rock wall beside me and he said whatever you do don't look down and I'm like yeah that's easier said than done and because where your eyes go that's where you the weight of your body goes it's just like when you're driving a car when you turn to do a head check this way you naturally turn this way when you head check this way you naturally turn this way wherever your eyes go your body

goes just the same he says prepare your mind for action this call to holiness is going to require of you to prepare your mind for action that holiness begins in your thought life what you think about determines how you live and we know in 2nd Corinthians 10 5 we are to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ if a thought is not helping your holiness and it is contrary to the Lord we're to take that thought if you will and put it in prison and say that will not have any reign on me or control over me away with this and I am I'm going to set my mind on something holy pure lovely good it is in the thought life that your Christianity is either real or fake you can fool everyone but God knows your thoughts we're to think about that which is true

Philippians 4 8 tells us noble that which is right that which is pure that which is lovely that which is admirable that which is excellent and praiseworthy and Paul says to the book and into the church at Philippi think about these things so for to be a holy people it begins in our mind secondly it requires a spiritual alertness being sober minded verse 13 says a spiritual alertness it literally means don't be drunk but it's obvious that there's a spiritual application to this drunkenness that is talking about meaning that we are to be alert and self-controlled it refers to having clarity of mind which is the result of good judgment holiness requires us to have begins in the mind but it requires us to have good judgment if there was a lion that was on the loose in our neighborhood the circus lost their lion apparently and it was in the neighborhood and we got word of that and now it's time to dismiss the church I bet we would be a little more careful about how we go to our cars and some of us would just say you know it's just not worth it I'm just going to wait until we hear the all clear sign to before I go out to my car because there would be a sober mindedness an alertness about the circumstances that we're in and are you alert to your circumstances and if you feed your mind with garbage of this world and not feed on things of God it is like getting drunk and staggering outside when there is a lying on the prowl you'll be dead meat you're not going to be a holy person because a holy person to be holy requires a spiritual alertness thirdly to be holy it is motivated by grace we have already seen this and set your hope verse 13 fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ because we have already talked about this I'm not going to get into it much but I want us to consider what we hear in Titus chapter 2 how does Titus talk about being a holy person this call to holiness and the Lord's return listen to how Titus chapter 2 11 through 14 shares for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people training us to renounce godliness and worldly passions and to live self-control upright and godly lives in this present age so there's this holiness but what what is the context waiting for the blessed hope the appearing of the glory of the great god and savior Jesus Christ there's this return who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a purify for himself for his own possession who are zealous for good works so the Lord has called us to holiness because of what he has done and looking forward to his return so to be a holy people begins in our mind requires a spiritual alertness and a motivated by grace what else does God's word say in this passage about being and becoming a holy people we must break from our past lives look with me in verse 14 make a break from our past lifestyle as obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance this is when you are dead to sin

this this these former this former ignorance when you are dead to sin and you they just sinned and you didn't know those those those the passions that led you to your former that were in your former ignorant state and says do not be conformed this word is like a word that means to be pressed into a mold so I have my here I'm not much of a baker but it is a bunt cake pan and and if no matter what the ingredients I put into this form when I it's done cooking and I plop it out it is going to be in the form of this mold and that's the idea when he says do not be conformed do not be pressed into the mold of the passions that were of your former ignorance so what were the passions of your former ignorance before Christ I don't care how old you were when you came to Christ you were in sin and you had passions of your former ignorance and they were largely self-oriented passions for example you don't have to teach a child you don't have to teach a child to take you have to teach a child to share there's a reason for that that child is self-oriented and they like your toy better than you do and they think they need it more than you do so they will take your toy but you have to teach don't you can't do that you need to share why do you do that because there's a passion that governs our lives that we live out in our former ignorance no matter how old we were when we came to faith in Christ and so he is saying do not allow that self-oriented life the passions of that you to be pressed into that mold you're no longer of that mold don't do that so what are those passions of our former ignorance that we that we have the passion for self-seeking whatever is in my best interest it is best for my own welfare that's what I do these are former passions for

self-protection deceit maybe my native tongue addictions maybe what I practice because it's a form of escape and it's a way to self-protect myself self-promotion social media capitalizes on this passion we want ourselves to sound better look better look like we have more than we do or are look like we eat better than we do taking pictures of our food posting it's important the passion for self self-pleasure addictions hedonistic lifestyles money is king people are to be used for my pleasure passion for self-serving seeing relationships through the lens that only benefit me I only do the things that make me look good this is the self-oriented life this is the form that the world and our passions will if we're not careful mold us into we'll all look like this if something doesn't change every time and as a people of God we're called to be holy obedient to the father that we must break from our past lifestyle if you are in a relationship where sex is outside of marriage flee your morality do not be conformed you're playing into this you're not you cannot claim holiness and be immoral in any one of our lives where there is self-orientation self-seeking self-protection

[21 : 27] self-promotion self-pleasuring these are passions of your former ignorance and the God's word would call you to repent repent and experience the joy of a God word-oriented life I find it interesting in Hebrews chapter 12 after chapter 11 I'm just going to turn there real briefly all of these people were mentioned in chapter 11 I'm going to read chapter 12 verse 1 in a moment but but we have to see the context of which chapter 12 verse 1 is found because right immediately preceding that is chapter 11 and I call it the Hall of Faith chapter where by faith able and then verse 5 by faith Enoch and all these wonderful godly men by faith Noah verse 8 by faith Abraham by faith Sarah Isaac Jacob Joseph Moses all of these folks were by faith they did great things and then Rahab and then it says this some of them were not even named and it says this of the unnamed saints that lived by faith that says they were stoned they were sawn and to they were killed with the sword they went about in skins of sheep and goats and destitute afflicted mistreated and then it says of whom the world was not worthy wandering about in the deserts and mountains and dens and the caves on the earth of whom this world was not worthy and then verse 12 says this or chapter 12 verse 1 says this after this great Hall of Faith chapter of these wonderful men and women who lived out their their faith in Christ then it says this therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses who is that great cloud of witnesses all the people that were just mentioned in chapter 11 all of these people let us lay aside every weight and sin which either clings to us so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us I find it interesting in chapter 12 verse 1 that it says let us lay aside not just every sin which clings so closely and run with endurance yes that is included but before sin is mentioned it says let us lay aside every weight every weight this is a bag I have had for 10 years and I carried everywhere it goes to work with me every week every day I put it in the truck come home with it I only usually go maximum 100 yards like a football field at length whenever I have this with me because it's actually very heavy it has my computer I have four books currently in here it's a party waiting to happen I've got sticky notes and posted notes I've got computer adapters in case I need to give a presentation anything I'm doing if I need to need anything if I want to lead a Bible study my Bible is in here it's just it's a Bible study waiting to happen and so it's in a bag and I carry this with me all the time but I really don't want to go more than 100 yards because it's actually heavy and it's a weight there's nothing morally wrong about me having this bag but it hinders me from running with endurance

I wouldn't want to run a race with this thing my point is this in order to be holy yes there's sin that we need to throw off things that are morally reprehensible that thou shall not do but there's also weight that we just kind of carry around with us and it's not necessarily sinful things entirely so example some individuals so convicted about things that are weight to them that do not help them pursue Christ or holiness they say I don't want a smart phone I just want a dumb phone there's too many things there's too many apps on a phone that distract me from spending time with the Lord so I don't want that I just want a dumb phone that just flips open and it calls and receives text that's all I want the phone to do is there anything wrong with having a smart phone I sure hope not I have one but but listen for that person that is a weight to them that they're saying I can't do this others say social media I'm not I'm done carrying the weight I give it up it hinders me from walking with Christ and being holy I refuse to carry that thing around anymore because UC Davis just came out with a longitudinal study with regard to the use of social media depression is on the rise eating disorders are on the rise suicide is on the rise anxiety and depression is on the rise over social media so some say that I'm done carrying the weight I don't want to have that anymore in my life it doesn't help me pursue Christ and there's nothing wrong so these things that I'm mentioning are morally

neutral there's nothing it's not sin but it's the weight so whatever it is that is in your life that is not in the category of sin but it's a weight that hinders you from pursuing Christ you too can lay that aside because to be a holy people we need to make a break from our past lifestyle and the things that fuel into that also we need to be a people who establish a habit of obedience years ago I read this book by Kevin DeYoung called a hole in our holiness and in this book he talks about the habit of obedience and because he he wants it to be rightly understood what is obedience look like because in our text it says as obedient children it assumes you're going to be obedient to the Lord so as obedient children so what is obedience biblically speaking and so he defines it in this book in one chapter this way it is spirit empowered gospel driven faith fueled effort so let me I'm going to give those one at a time here as we go along it is firstly spirit empowered in first Peter one verse two earlier in the chapter is you can see that the spirit sets us apart in Christ so that we might be cleansed by the blood of Christ so we are spirit empowered and the spirit works in us so that we can be obedient to Christ this is what is different about obedience and legalism and so it is firstly obedience is firstly spirit empowered secondly it is gospel driven notice how in our text this call to be obedient and call to holiness is firstly rooted in our salvation on both sides of our text additionally in the book of Romans chapter one and two do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing

of your mind in chapters or chapter 12 verses one and two but what is in the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans themes like justification adoption predestination atonement reconciliation preservation and glorification what's the point this call to obedience is a is a is a is a is gospel driven it's gospel driven it's a response to the gospel it's gospel motivated so it is spirit empowered obedience is spirit empowered it is gospel driven it is faith fueled by faith we are justified and by faith we continue in sanctification taking God at its word his command his promises this longing for with hope for so consider the beatitudes how the beatitudes are faith filled there in Matthew chapter five blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are the mourn are those who mourn for they shall be comforted think how faith fueled you have to be to say lord I am mourning

I am in its season of distress I'm in a season of loss I am mourning for they shall be comforted you have to be faith filled to say I don't know how this is going to look like I'm not going to deny I'm in a state of mourning but lord I'm going to take you at your word that one day I will be comforted blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy and you say well how does this Scott holiness and obedience this in spirit empowered gospel driven faith fueled thing work this faith filled thing taking God at its word work well here's one that helps me fight lust blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God so I have a thought that is unbecoming of

Christ I take it and bring it into the obedience of Christ and I think to myself I want to be a pure and heart person for one day I will see God what does that look like what does that entirely mean I don't really know but I'm going to take you at your word lord and because I desire so badly to be one who is pure in heart I want to see you obedience is faith fueled one day it will all be worth it and we will all see the Lord blessed are those who revile you think about how we went back to school recently our children did and perhaps that's an intimidating arena and people are not kind toward one proclaiming Christ and the gospel in that arena and so what would I share with my child child blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you obedience is faith fueled for those who are persecuted uttered all kinds of things because of your identity in Christ rejoice and be glad your reward is great in heaven so obedience is spirit empowered gospel driven faith fueled last word effort obedience is spirit empowered gospel driven faith fueled effort effort is not a four letter word yes the spirit empowers the pursuit of the holiness yes the gospel drives us toward Christ likeness yes faith fuels our obedience but we still have to put forth effort God's mercy does not automatically produce obedience I want us to consider a few verses here to emphasize the need for effort Romans 8 13 says that the spirit that by the spirit we must put to death the deeds of the flesh Ephesians 4 22-24 instructs us to put off the old self and put on the new Colossians 3 5 commands us that we are to put to death all that is earthly that is within us in 1st Timothy 6 12 it urges us to fight the good fight Luke 13 24 exhorts us to strive to enter the narrow gate 1st Corinthians 9 24 25 speaks of running the race by disciplining the body 1st Peter 1 verse 5 flat out commands us to say make every effort

so yes we make effort to be holy many Christians stall out in their sanctification simply for a lack of effort unwilling to spend time with the Lord in his word unwilling to spend time in a community with other gods other of God's people unwilling to pray unwilling to discipline their mind in their thought life may we be like Paul that say I worked harder than any of them though it was not I but it was the grace that is within me so let us not be conformed to the former ignorance okay then Paul in verse or sorry this Peter in verse 15 says this but as you were called but as he who called you was holy you also be holy and all of your conduct and then in verse 16 since it is written be holy for I am holy I think sometimes the distinction

[35 : 32] is not meant to be a book club but I want to share with you this book by brother Lawrence it's called the practice of the presence of God brother Lawrence was a man who lived in the 16th century he was a carmelite he was of the carmelite order of monks who lived just outside of Paris France 161600 he was conscripted into the army French army in the 15 years old and he served in the army in the 30 year war that ravaged central Europe of the time he was injured in battle and he could not no longer serve in the military service and so he gave himself to the Lord and he served as a monk in that time what's interesting about brother Lawrence is that he he was kind of a larger man who lacked some social graces and so they gave him the dish pit duty your job in the monastery is to do dishes that's pretty much all brother Lawrence did for the rest of his life with a small after he could not stand and could not do some things that required of doing dishes he he repaired sandals toward later last of his life what I appreciate about brother

Lawrence and in this book is he talks about how everything that he did he just practiced in the presence of the Lord everything he did was a sacred activity doing dishes was a sacred activity so he delighted in doing dishes for not only the monastery but for the guests that the monastery would host so there would be great pilgrimages of the day and so it would be common to have pilgrims come in and stay at the Abbey and in the monastery there and he had to do the dishes for all of them and to read this book and to read his meditations while he did he just delighted in the presence of God and everything that he did everything was sacred to him no task was not sacred so what would it be like think of think a holy you and I would become if we saw every activity as a as a blessing from the Lord that we get to do to serve the Lord and to bless others how much that would just change so much driving your car is a sacred activity doing the dishes serving your family it's a sacred activity I don't think sometimes the distinction between sacred and secular is all that helpful I like the distinction between sacred and wicked there is something that is wicked that's sinful that's not of Christ not of the Lord that he deems unworthy but outside of the wicked it's sacred a conversation with a neighbor is a sacred activity oh how eating breakfast with your family go through your day thinking this is a sacred activity and I get to be holy in it and honor the Lord and be a blessing to others oh how things would change brother Lawrence said this in his book that we should establish ourselves a sense of God's presence by continually conversing with him that it might be a shameful thing to quit the conversation and to think of trivelies and fool aries those were antiquated words but but he he just didn't not he didn't want to stop the conversation with the Lord that he was having throughout his day yes even while just doing dishes or thanks and so he just talked to the Lord and everything he did oh how that would change be holy for I am holy then verse 15 the one who was called you is holy so one of the things that is going to require of us to be a holy people is to understand who it is that is holy that we are to emulate and to have a deep affection for the one who is holy and to learn about him in RC Sproul's book the the the holiness of God he points out that there's no other attribute of God that is mentioned three times with no we don't say God never says of himself or others don't say of God eternal eternal eternal or love love love mercy mercy mercy but when Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple and he saw two majestic angels each having six wings we are told that the angels sang out holy holy holy for the Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory in Hebrew there's no punctuation marks to add emphasis so we in the English language we have an exclamation point that helps add excitement or emphasis

I'm really excited about this today and we would exclamation point or you say I'm really excited about this today period so there's no there's no there's no punctuation marks so the way to add emphasis is to repeat the word there's the holy place in the temple then there's the holy of holies that the high priest only can go once a year but there is someone who is holy holy holy and he is called us to be holy because he is holy and this is one of the motivations to be holy because God so I encourage us to know the Lord and to understand who he is I'm just going to submit one last book

the pursuit of holiness by Jerry Bridges either one of these books you can come up afterward but I just I have appreciated getting to know the Lord I get nervous when people treat the Lord and speak of the Lord as one's buddy yes he's a friend but he is holy and I want to have some reverential awe of who God is for Isaiah when he met and encountered the Lord it was an emotionally violent and personally undoing experience when he saw the Lord high and lifted up and he became keenly aware of his own sin as he understood God's holiness and he came keenly aware of the sin of others around him as he became painfully aware of the Lord's holiness he says woe is me for I am undone for I am a man of unclean lips my own personal sin and I dwell in the midst of the people with unclean lips and my eyes have seen the king the Lord of Lords the Lord of hosts oh that we would want to know the Lord like this and it would help us know what it is that we are to be like as holy let me conclude with this verse in Isaiah 15 57 50 thus says the one who is on high and lifted up who inhabits eternity whose name is holy and he says I dwell in the high and a holy place and I also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit to revive a spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite what I so love about the Lord is yes he is holy holy holy set apart unto himself his perfections are beautiful and yet he says I dwell in the high holy place in this verse and then he says and with him who is of a contrite heart not only his holiness doesn't separate us from us he wants to dwell with us especially with those who are of a contrite and lowly spirit who also desire to be holy and be like him hallelujah so church our member covenant number two reads that we are going to discern truth from air living wisely in this present world our responsibility to one another is this I'm gonna we're gonna deny ungodliness and fleshly passions keeping ourselves unstained from this world as we strive to lead self-controlled lives upright and holy and being transformed by the renewing of our mind and sound doctrine and so let us do that let us be a holy people as he is holy and know the Lord Father thank you so much for this day thank you for the opportunity to consider your word thank you for your goodness and kindness Lord I pray that as we spend time with you as Isaiah encountered you that we would be an undone people as we know you more and we would be keenly aware of all the ways within ourselves that we sin against you and desire to put those things aside help us to see in the areas of our life that where we are sinning we need to put that away but also where we have weight that just hinders us from running toward you and running the race of faith that you've given us thank you Lord for this day to consider these things and and may we respond to you both today this time and this week as we know you more love you Lord Amen.