

Living Holy Lives

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[0 : 00] Hello, everyone. Well, in 1956, an Indian man called Guyada Parida had an argument with his wife.

And after this, he decided that he had he'd had enough, even though his wife said it wasn't really a big issue. I wonder what you think he did.

Maybe he stormed out, moved country. Well, he did leave. But he left the house, walked about a kilometer and set up his new home in a mango tree.

This is a true story. He went to live up a tree because he was fed up with his wife. Not very nice, I think.

He told his wife he wanted to remain there until he died. Talk about a drama queen. The article from the paper was written in 2006.

[1 : 20] Fifty-three years after he went up this tree and he was still there. He was 83 years old. Apart from the fact that he chopped a hissy fit and he should have made up with his wife.

Well, trees, they aren't really meant to be dwelling places for people, are they? Can you imagine what life in a tree would be like?

Can you imagine how sick of mangoes you'd get? He said he wanted to live there until he died. How long do you reckon you'd stick it out for?

Well, as you know, we've been working through Exodus. And in this part of the series in particular, we've been seeing the great distance between God and his people because of sin.

The passages about the tabernacle have been showing how God will set his people apart for himself so they can draw near to him.

[2 : 31] Well, tonight we're taking a break from Exodus, but we're not taking a break from thinking about holiness and what the set apart life looks like. Last week in our New Testament passage, we saw that those who trust in Jesus are a holy nation.

They are a royal priesthood. They're God's own possession. In tonight's passage, the one that Amanda just read, Peter calls his readers foreigners and exiles in a land that they don't belong.

But unlike the stubborn Indian husband, those who belong to Christ are set apart for him and commanded to live like him in the place they don't belong.

And so firstly, they are told to live holy lives, to abstain from sinful desires. You can see that point one.

So look at verse 11. He says, Dear friends, I urge you as foreigners and exiles to abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your souls.

[3 : 42] Peter is saying that while living in a land that you don't belong, you'll be tempted to live like the people in that land, to do what they do, to get involved and to be part of their activities.

Or you might be thinking, well, so what? We live here. What's wrong with doing what they do? But that's not really what Peter's talking about.

He's talking about giving into sin. There's a difference between having a barbecue with your neighbours and getting involved with their lives and getting drunk with them so that you're not the odd one out.

Like the sacrifices of the tabernacle, the sacrifice of Jesus set his people apart so that we're not to indulge in the sinful nature, the sinful desires which wage war against our soul.

This warning to Christians then and now is real. God has made us who believe holy through the blood of Jesus.

[5 : 00] This means that we don't go away like move up a tree. It means that we live differently. And Peter doesn't use soft language, does he?

He says sinful desires wage war against your soul. Do you ever feel like COVID is waging war against the world at the moment or just Victoria?

Whenever we think we get the upper hand, boom, lockdown. God's chosen people are in a battle with their sinful desires.

Even after we've had the vaccine, so to speak, even after we've had sin paid for, it still has the power to tempt, doesn't it?

And while we await our renewed heavenly body, we do desire certain sinful things, don't we?

[6 : 21] Don't you? So friends, what sinful desires are waging war against your soul? Do you need to make changes to abstain from the sin that you desire most?

Perhaps for you it's computer related, being in a private place, installing accountability software, talking to trusted brothers or sisters.

Do you need to come and talk to Mark or me or to a trusted friend about issues with porn that you're struggling with? We are not your judge.

Don't hold on to it. Later is worse than sooner. And the same is true with God. And he is the judge. And sinful desires go far beyond sexual, don't they?

Are you much of a window shopper? Not at the moment, of course. I know window shopping or internet browsing seems harmless.

[7 : 39] But isn't it just coveting? I'll just use this. Dreaming about all the things that you can't have or think you need?

I often hear people say, I'm just going to the shops to see if there's anything that I need. I'm a culprit when it comes to this.

Oz bargain is my kryptonite. Maybe your struggle is making yourself feel better at the expense of others.

To joke or jest or put down or gossip or judge. I wouldn't do that. I'm not like that. Another struggle of mine.

Perhaps for you it's well-being or comfort. Is it too hard to give up time or money to help people?

[8 : 45] Too difficult to sacrifice in support for gospel work? Peter says that sinful desires wage war because allowing sin to reign is what we do without thinking.

They are a constant issue. But God's people are called to be holy just as he is holy. So we must flee from these desires.

After this Peter says what God's chosen people are to do.

Peter says what kinds of lives they should have. And in truth it seems like quite a big responsibility. Verse 12. Have a look. He says live such good lives among the pagans.

That though they accuse you of doing wrong. They may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. He says your lives are to be so good in front of the pagans.

[9 : 51] Or in our case those who don't know God. That God may be glorified on our account. Despite what they say about us.

What does that look like? Well he goes on. Verse 13. Submit yourself for the Lord's sake to every human authority.

Whether to the emperor as the supreme authority. Or to governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong. Or to commend those who do right.

For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people. Live as free people. But do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil.

Live as God's slaves. Show proper respect for everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

[10 : 51] Fear God. We really feel this at the moment don't we? Not to say that five o'clock church members usually have a flagrant disregard for the law.

But over the last year and particularly this week. Well the law has felt extremely restrictive hasn't it?

Far more than we might have ever thought possible. And lots of people. And lots of people. Even lots of Christians. Told me that it was unacceptable.

That we should submit to the government's rules during the 2020 lockdown. But do you see what Peter says in verse 13? It's for the Lord's sake.

That you submit yourselves to every human authority. It's our goal to silence the talk of foolish people.

[11 : 50] To show them that even though we have another master. We still submit to the authorities that God has put over us. If we ignored the authorities and didn't submit to them like God says.

When they accuse us of doing wrong like it says in verse 12. They won't see any good deeds which reflect on God. Instead what will they see?

Maybe just hypocrisy? Arrogance? Why would they think we're any different than anyone else? Or that our God is praiseworthy?

Perhaps there are other laws that you don't agree with. That God has put over us. The speed limit. Copying video games or movies for friends.

Or yourself. Stealing from work maybe. Things that are easy to do without getting caught. Peter says. Live as free people.

[13 : 00] But do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil. Fear God and honour the emperor. They lived under a far more oppressive ruler than we do.

Yet God still expected them to show respect. To everyone. And to honour the ruler. That killed them for trusting him. I wonder how you're feeling about this.

It's a high bar isn't it? Certainly feels like it. As we've been reading the requirements of sacrifice in the tabernacle recently.

It's been easy to think. Wow. How crazy is this process that they've got to go through? I wonder how you feel about this.

This holy living compared to that. Well Peter's not finished. He continues in verse 18.

[14 : 05] Be subject to masters. He says. Just as we should give glory to God by the way we live in regards to the law.

We can also follow Christ when we submit ourselves to masters. Verse 18 says. Slaves. In reverent fear of God. Submit yourselves to masters.

Not only to those who are good and considerate. But also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable. If someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering.

Because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a bidding for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and endure it.

This is commendable before God. Now we're not slaves. Like some of Peter's readers may have been. But we do have bosses.

[15 : 03] Teachers. Authorities. Followers of Jesus are to submit to their. Rulers.

To their. The people over them. Even when they're harsh. Out of reverent fear for God.

And this means. The difference between. Begrudging service. With back talk. Compared to willing submission.

The person who fears God. Knows that. God can see you. Even if your boss. Or your teacher can't. What's particularly.

Striking about this challenge is. Instead of Peter saying. Those who oppose God. Will get what's coming to them. He says.

[16 : 05] If you suffer for doing good and endure it. This is commendable. To God. God. How might unjust suffering happen.

Or any number of ways. You might discourage. Put downs on the outcast. You might stick up for the boss.

Or the teacher. Imagine that. You are after all. Seeking to submit yourself to them. Out of reverence to God. God. You might stand up for what you believe in.

You might speak up about your faith. You might pass up opportunities. Because you need to commit the church. HTY. Bible study.

Once again. It sounds like a big deal. Doesn't it? You thought all the tabernacle instructions. Were complex. Why should we suffer so much?

[17 : 06] Why is suffering. Something that God desires. For us. Well point three.

Because it's the example. That Jesus left for us. Verse 21. To this you were called. Because Christ suffered for you.

Leaving you an example. That you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin. And no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him. He did not retaliate.

When he suffered. He made no threats. Instead he entrusted himself. To him who judges justly. Peter is describing to his readers.

The kind of life. That the Lord Jesus lived. That the Lord Jesus lived. He was falsely accused. Yet he did not retaliate. He committed no sin. No deceit was in his mouth.

[18 : 06] He made no threats. He entrusted himself to God. Who judges justly. He knew that even through beating. And even death. God would do what was right for him.

Can you believe that? What was right for him. He always feared God. Friends. This is the way that you stand up under unjust. Suffering out of fear and reverence.

For God. It means that when. Life is going. Terribly. Do you entrust yourself to God?

When you're trapped in your house. Do you entrust yourself to God? When God isn't answering your prayer. Do you entrust yourself to God?

When you're studying for exams. And perhaps failing. Do you entrust yourself to God? When you're looking for. And can't find a job.

- [19 : 13] Do you entrust yourself to God? I've been saying. All this feels like a huge effort. Just like. What the Israelites had to do at the tabernacle. What we need to remember. Is that the Israelites. Were sacrificing.
- In order to draw near to God. When Jesus died. His sacrifice. Was once for all. Verse 24 says.
- He himself. Bore our sins. In his body. On the cross. So that we might die. To sins. And live for righteousness. By his wounds. You have been healed.
- For you were like sheep. Going astray. But now you have returned. To the shepherd. And overseer. Of your souls. Jesus went before us. He made us.
- [20 : 10] Who trust in him. Righteous. So we don't have to keep following. In-depth instructions. By his wounds. By his sacrifice. We have been healed.
- This is great news. For us who believe. And so if you haven't yet. Put your trust in Jesus. Can I encourage you. To do it right now. Jesus is the only one.
- Who can heal you. The only one. Who can take your sin. And make you righteous. In God's sight. It's Jesus.
- Who sets us apart. It's Jesus. Who makes us. A holy nation. A royal priesthood. This is why we.
- Who trust in him. Ought to live like this. Because we've been changed. By him. We claim to be different.
- [21 : 10] So we must live. According to what Christ. Has made. Us. Jesus suffered.
- To leave us an example. Not so we could live. However. He showed us. How to live holy lives.
- So with his strength. Let's follow his example. Entrust yourself. To him. Who judges justly. And live the holy life.
- That he called you to. Let me pray. Heavenly Father. Thanks for Jesus.
- Whose sacrifice. Took our sin. So that we might die to sin. And live to righteousness. Help us to trust in Jesus. And follow the example.
- [22 : 10] That he left us. And live the holy life. He has called us to. So that those who see our good deeds. May glorify God. On the day he visits us. Amen.