

# The Obedience of Hope

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Date: 28 April 2024

Preacher: Rev. Daniel Avitan

[ 0 : 00 ] Father in heaven, what words do I have to give that are better than yours? Zero. Nothing. So Lord, may only your words prevail this morning.

Lord, let us all come under your word, submitting to the truth that is in your holy scriptures. And Lord, by your Holy Spirit, minister to us and transform our lives and conform our wills to yours. Lord, we ask your blessing as we continue on in 1 Peter. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. If you have a Bible, we'll be in the text quite a bit this morning.

So please follow along. There's still a few Bibles at the back there. So you can grab one at any time. Don't worry about interrupting me. 1 Peter.

Actually, we're in 1 Peter chapter 1, starting in the 13th verse. Bit of a mix-up with our schedule. That's why. No, no, it's not your fault at all.

[ 1 : 01 ] It's actually mine. But they're still great songs. I enjoy cooking. I'm not a fantastic cook. I don't cook like Michelin star, beautiful place or setups or whatever.

But I like cooking. I feel like it's one of my creative outlets. And I really am not a very creative person. But what I'm not good at is baking. I'm just not good with it.

I feel like it's restrictive. And I've baked a couple things in my life. And they weren't train wrecks. But I just don't enjoy it. But with baking, I am told, and what I've seen from my dear wife, who is a great baker, the order of the recipe is very important to follow.

Cooking, you have to follow the recipe. You have to follow along, of course. But there's flexibility. You can skip a step. You can add something in. If you forget something, kind of halfway through, the dish isn't done.

You can salvage things. But baking, it's precise. The order matters. If you mix things too early or if you forget an ingredient, it's not going to turn out the way it ought to turn out.

[ 2 : 20 ] I bring this up because I'm giving the sermon today the title of The Obedience of Hope. And I say the obedience of hope and not the hope of obedience.

Order matters in our text this morning. We've looked at the hope that we have in Christ Jesus, how it's an unshakable hope.

And it is rooted in the resurrection, the revelation and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. But in our text today, it's not so much talking about the hope we have, but the things we ought to do, the obedience we have to, that it's expected of us, of God's children.

And it's critical that we talk of the obedience as the obedience of hope and not the hope of obedience. What do I mean?

A good rule of thumb in biblical interpretation is that the indicatives of God always precede the imperatives of God. The things that are in scripture that tell us of who God is and what he does or what he gives, it always then feeds into or speaks to how we then respond to God.

[ 3 : 38 ] So the indicatives always precede the imperatives. The imperatives always rely upon the indicatives. It's a very important rule of thumb in biblical interpretations, very basic but very profound.

We think about God initiating salvation and then we respond to salvation. We think of God displaying his love for us and we receive his love by faith.

Then we express our love to him and to others. He gives us a living and unshakable hope and in light of that, we then obey him. Now if we were to switch it around and say, I'm going to obey God and then maybe hopefully God gives me his salvation or his approval or then he makes me a son or then he makes me a daughter.

That's a totally different situation than God initiating and God doing and it's an expression of his very character and then we respond to it.

So we aren't talking about the hope of obedience. We're talking about the obedience that flows out of hope. You see how the order matters. When we have this living hope that our eternity is secure, that deep meaning and blessing are ours, that obedience becomes not something that we do in order to curry the favor of God, but rather it becomes now an expression of praise that we give to him.

[ 5 : 14 ] It is a way to say thank you to God. It's a way to acknowledge his goodness in our lives that he has gone the distance for us and then we respond to him as thankful children.

With this in mind, Peter calls the church to live as holy people, not telling us that it will result in our sonship or our ransoming or our unshakable hope in the resurrection, in the salvation to come, but rather as people that are transformed first by God.

We are to be holy because he has saved us. And Peter's going to help us to understand this by looking at how we are holy, made holy by God, as we have a relationship with him as a child, as a relationship to a father, as people who have been ransomed, and how we have become spiritually newborn in Christ.

So first point, the children of the father. We have this relationship with God. We're looking at verses 13 to 16. If you have a Bible, follow with me, starting in verse 13. Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy.

[ 7 : 00 ] Peter tells us, in light of what Christ has done, not to be idle. Because the salvation, although we experience it now, Peter is talking about the salvation to come, the return of Christ, where all the wrongs will be righted, where we will enjoy eternity in his presence forever.

And he's saying, listen, that's coming. Don't sit around doing nothing. Actively wait. Idleness is not a virtue for the people of God. We have a future hope that, Peter says, informs our present actions.

But he warns the church here, and us this morning, not just against idleness, but also against delusion. The call here, in verse 13, is to prepare our minds for action being sober-minded.

The call is mental sobriety in this life. And really, it is Peter telling us to not lose sight of our true home, our citizenship, which is in heaven.

And remember, Peter is speaking to the church as elect exiles of the dispersion in what is today Asia Minor, but really all Christians at all time.

[ 8 : 17 ] Don't lose sight of that. This life is beautiful. Opportunities abound. We can enjoy the fruit of hard work and the goodness of God's creation.

But don't lose sight of what is to come. Don't lose sight of the future salvation. Be sober-minded. Prepare your minds for action.

Set your hope, it says here, the second part of verse 13, fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The call to mental sobriety is a call to self-control, restraint, moderation, rationality.

It's to not be deluded. And that might, you might read that and think, like, this is, this is describing boring people. People that are not exciting.

People that are just level, but there's no real excitement in their lives. I'm somebody who enjoys excitement, adventure. Some other people are saying, like, amen, brother.

[ 9 : 26 ] Right there. That's the type of person I am. That's the type of people I like. But this isn't to be understood as some kind of call to boredom. Rather, it is the behavior and the mentality of somebody who has their eyes set on the prize.

And as such, isn't getting influenced or trained by what our society tells us is good. And this is the big rub for us because our society isn't neutral in any kind of way, in the same way that Rome society wasn't neutral in the first century.

Our society actively trains us in things that it values. It trains us in the type of citizen we ought to be. Rome trained her subjects, her citizens, to live for the empire as if it were eternal.

To worship the emperor as if he were eternal. To value glory and honor as defined by Rome.

Things aren't terribly different for us in Ottawa.

We are trained. We would call it temptation. But in a sense, we are being trained by our society in this present life to live as if it was eternal.

[10:51] Without any consideration for real eternity. We are trained to put our hope in things to accumulate for the sake of accumulation, of enjoyment. Things that ought to be tools to help us live a good life.

Or things that we can bless others for become taskmasters or slave owners. And we become the slaves. We desire prestige in one's career so that our jobs cease to be the thing that we do to provide for our family.

Or even to better the neighborhoods around us. We're working for the common good. But become the very thing that we can puff out our chests because we continue to climb the ladders.

Or we are recognized. And that is where our motivation begins to lie. We act as if personal autonomy is the highest form of meaning.

And yet, as Pope John Paul coined it almost 30 years ago, it has led to a culture of death.

Therefore, as those who have a living and unshakable hope, Peter reminds us, prepare your minds for action.

[12:12] Do not be delusional. Do not be trained up in the ways of this world. Resist the cultural training of our day. How? By setting our hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Remembering that our home and our hope is in Christ. Friends, this is holiness. This is what the scriptures call holiness. It is more than merely the execution of good actions.

It's not that Peter here is saying, listen, do these things. He is again saying, in light of what God has done. And what has he done? He has made us holy through Christ.

Our sins have been forgiven us. We are called children of God. No longer are we called citizens of this world. But sojourners, our allegiances, our passports have been transferred to that of heaven.

In light of that, he is saying, be holy. So therefore, we see that it's not merely an execution of good actions. We are called to be holy as our Father in heaven is holy.

[13:21] Which is to say, like God, our holiness ought to flow from our character. The problem is, our character isn't holy.

Our character default is not righteous. It is not naturally good, but it is bent. It is askew. It is broken. So how on earth can we be holy as God is holy if his holiness flows out of who he is and his character?

It's a big problem. But again, God provides the big solution. Again, we have to read this text. But the imperative or the indicative precedes the imperative.

Who God is precedes what we are then to do. And what's this big solution that God provides? God gives us a new heart. He gives us his Holy Spirit.

So that like him, our holiness can flow from who we are now in Christ. We are no longer children of wrath, but we are children of God.

[14:30] It's a big deal. It means that we must know his salvific touch. He must give us his Holy Spirit. Only then can we be holy like he is holy.

Again, obedience, it has to flow from our hope and not the other way around. It's not the hope of obedience. It's the obedience of hope. And then we become to act like and be like our Heavenly Father.

As my son Joseph gets older, family, especially Christine, there are comments made about how he and I are similar. And of course, he's my son.

But there's little things where I'm starting to catch on. And I think, man, I have this little guy that is not just acting like me because it's part of his DNA, but he's actively looking at how I behave so that he can imitate me.

I mean, just on an aside, that's a bit of a scary thing. It means I need to be on my P's and Q's. But it's also this beautiful reality that this son that is a gift from God to us is actively trying to imitate his father.

[15:49] And so, too, for us, as we are given the Spirit of God, we are to ask the question about who God is and what his character is. And in a situation where there is brokenness, how would he go about healing?

How would Christ not retaliate but rather bless? How would he look to give rather than take?

And all of a sudden, we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts to help us with this, and we begin to change. We begin to imitate our father. But we don't imitate our father without his help.

It's, again, he gives us his Spirit so that we can do the things that he has called us to do. Being holy cannot mean incorporating additional religious beliefs.

The problem with the Israelites, and the Apostle Paul will expand upon this in his epistles, but the Israelites saw the law as not pointing to the lawgiver, but as the means to achieve their own ritual purity and their own holiness through their own beliefs, and it blew up in their face.

[17:07] Rather, the call is to mimic and follow our father. To be holy is to conform our thinking and behavior to God's revealed character and become citizens of his heavenly kingdom.

It also means we're set apart by virtue of being connected to God so that we have his Spirit, we follow him, but we will inevitably be out of place in our places where we live, work, and play. It's bound to happen. We are marked by God's love, with love, toward him loving, well, loving him, and then towards our neighbors loving them.

But this is not the cultural mood. It is not the breath that enlivens 2024 Ottawa.

We can't be about just mere behavior modification, tweaking existing religious beliefs, but we are called friends to a new identity in Christ and to live out that new identity.

[18:20] And how are we beneficiaries of that new identity? Because we are ransomed from slavery and death by the precious blood of Christ. And this leads us to our second point. We are people who have been ransomed.

Look with me at verses 17 and we'll continue on to 21. And if you call on him as 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 futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Like verses 3 to 11, or 3 to 12 rather, last week, 3 to 12 last week, this is one sentence in the original language.

So if you remember, verses 3 to 11, I mean you could read it at home, later on, it is a huge chunk of information. One sentence in the Greek. This isn't as big of a section, but still, one sentence, all that I just read, in the Greek.

[19:46] And it's deeply connected to the previous section, verses 3 to 11, but also 12 to 16, or 13 rather, to 16. And again, we remember that the indicatives of God precede the imperatives of God.

I'm repeating that on purpose, by the way, a number of times. So as you read scripture throughout the week, you're thinking, hold on a second, God is asking me to do something. Is it in light of what he has done?

Again, indicatives preceding the imperatives of God. So, back to the text. Although God is our Father, he is no less an impartial judge.

So we hold these things, it's a mystery in a sense, how God is our Father, through Christ, who is our brother, but Christ is also our King, but God is also our Judge, and the Holy Spirit resides in us, he's also our Comforter, and our Guide.

God is our God, the Trinitarian God, who is actively at work in us, he is many things to us. So God is our Father, through Christ, our High Priest, our Savior, our Big Brother, but he is no less the just and impartial judge.

[21:05] Yes, we are saved by grace, and not works, but what we do matters. So connected is right living, to right believing, that the Apostle James, who, seems that Peter will quote him, in the next section, even though James is quoting Isaiah, we'll get to that, but, so much so that, that the Apostle James says, that faith without works, is dead faith.

Peter here is telling us, again, that idleness is a no-go, for the Christian. And that we ought to fear God, which should be understood, as something more than, just a, a nice reverence, and something less than terror.

That God, is an all-consuming fire. That he is, a being, that is, infinite, who has created all things, he is never not, been around, he has never not existed, he is not, a being to trifle with.

And yet, again, here's the mystery, of our faith, another example, of the mystery, of our faith, and yet, we come to him, as children. Our redemption, from our previous life, came at a high cost, and so, acting, not as citizens, of heaven, but citizens of Rome, or of Ottawa, in this case, is to, treat

with contempt, what is infinitely precious, our, connection with God, as father, through what? The thing we are ransomed with, the precious blood of Christ. Look at verse 18. Knowing that you are ransomed, from the futile ways, inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things, such as silver, or gold, verse 19, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb, without blemish, or spot.

[ 22 : 53 ] Christianity, seeks to change culture. It just does. And we might be exhausted, from hearing the culture war, and I think rightfully so.

The way it's communicated, can be frustrating, and exhausting, a lot of straw men, and, anyways, I'm sympathetic, to people that are just, done with the culture war.

But make no mistake, Christianity, changes culture. It just, it does. As people come to faith, they leave behind the old ways. It's, they, they, they, they cease, to, be citizens, again, of Rome, or of Ottawa, breathing, the Roman air, breathing, the, or drinking the Roman water, but rather, they become citizens, of heaven.

So, Christianity, seeks to liberate people, from traditions, and religious practices, and ways of thinking, that, the scriptures call futile. That do little, to give meaning, and can never, live, lead to, rather, eternal life.

In short, Christianity, destroys hopelessness. It always has this in mind, to make citizens, of earth, elect exiles. but unlike, other faiths, other philosophies, such as, Islam, which demands, a cultural conformity, or Buddhism, which envisions, all becoming absorbed, into the one, or, Marxism, or fascism, which demands, social, or ethnic purity, at the expense, of the individual, Christianity, transforms, and redeems, individuals, and cultures, and recognizes, that people have, inherent worth, made in the image of God.

[ 24 : 51 ] Christianity, transforms, and redeems, but also, redeems cultures. It recognizes, that common grace, is given by God, to all people, so that, the good parts of culture, are seasoned with salt, and become even better.

But the bad parts of culture, are slowly, but surely, lopped off. Christianity, changes culture.

There's just, no way, about it. So, we've seen, the world over, where true worship, happens, true Christian worship. Not just cultural Christianity, or aspects of Christendom.

People, worship God, not in Latin, or in Greek, or in Hebrew, but in their native tongues. The, the, the incredible, work of, Bible translators, over the past, 200 years, but, again, it's been happening, throughout time, but, over the past, 200 years, has seen, the Bible translated, into, countless, hundreds, of languages.

Why? Because people, people need to worship God, in their own tongues. People, also get to, worship God, in expressions, and, in, in, in ways, that are culturally, unique to them.

[ 26 : 16 ] We don't, dance, at church. Some children, try, and, and somebody, might want to just get, a big round of clapping, going on, you know, God bless you.

If you try it. And, I think that's okay. I think it's okay, that we don't dance, at church. And, maybe, I don't want to actually, I'll just leave it there. Alright? But, if you go to different parts of, other continents, which is a part of, their DNA.

and that's fantastic. And, I ought not to, to say, this is the proper way of worship, and look how stiff we are. And, they ought not to, say, to us, you know, maybe we could do with a bit more, you know, standing upright, instead of this dancing stuff.

The point is this, that God doesn't conform us, to this one, single, solitary version, of what, Christianity is, but rather, it, it, it, it infuses, existing beautiful things, and lifts them up, and elevates them.

Also, to know, who we truly are, in God, means that we see the world, with the sobriety, again, back to verse 13, and 14, that helps us to understand, and relate properly, both to God, and creation.

[ 27 : 34 ] And all of a sudden, we then, get to connect with people, not on the surface, but we understand, or at least grow in our understanding, of what makes people tick, that people desperately need meaning, and that Jesus gives it.

Christianity, granted, doesn't change cultures overnight, and a lot of things have, horrible things have been done, in the, in the name of Christianity, but this text, helps us to remember, that we were ransomed, by Christ, for Christ, by the blood of Christ, and that, that is the very impetus, for our change.

What happens, when we try to ransom ourselves, with silver and gold, we try to elevate ourselves, we try to redeem ourselves, we try to bring salvation, to our own lives, the scripture here, it says it's futile, and we know this, and yet we continue to, experiment with different things, to make us feel better, to give us deeper meaning, give it enough time, it shows, to be futile, but we know this, everybody here, would have heard of, examples, of, people wrongfully convicted, 10 years, 20 years, 25 years, DNA evidence, new, circumstantial things, that come about, and the person is let free, it's a wonderful thing, but then, you know, in the ensuing years, they sue the city, or the province, or the country, and they get, a payout, David Milgard, a famous Canadian, was paid 10 million dollars, for being wrongfully convicted, for something like, 20 plus years in jail, none of us would say, that the sum paid to him, was equal to the years lost, nobody, give him 100 million, pack on 200 million, 300 million, how, how can you buy time, how can you buy a life lost, when we try to, ransom ourselves, with silver and gold, it's futile, two quick things, about the blood of Christ here, in verses 19 and 20, the first is that,

Peter has in mind, the act of manumission, the idea of liberating, slaves, in ancient Rome, a slave would be liberated, and would have to ratify, their liberation, by going to, a pagan temple, and paying some kind of tax, so that, they would be liberated, from their earthly master, but they would, inevitably, become a slave, to, whatever deity, that they, paid this ransom to, they would, never not be, a slave, Paul, or sorry, Peter here, is using this, this language, to help the, the people in Asia Minor, in Rome, understand that, something similar happening, with, with Jesus, except that, unlike the pagan gods, that demand a payment, for their, their liberation, God, in Christ, gives himself, as the penalty, for their liberation, this is a different kind of God, this is a different kind of ransoming, and that we become his slave, but, we have, perfect freedom, the precious blood, of Christ, is our liberation, the second thing,

Peter has in mind, is rooted in the sacrificial system, in the Old Testament, where a sacrifice, sacrifice, without blemish, would be offered, instead of, a sinful Israelite, again, we see God himself, as, the spotless, perfect, sacrifice, Peter's hammering it home, to both, Jew and Gentile alike, that it took, the death of God himself, to ransom us from death, nothing short, there's nothing short, and any attempt, to, to achieve, what only God can achieve, is futility, we cannot make ourselves, citizens of heaven, no matter how hard, we try, no matter how nice, your backyard, oasis is, you say this, my little piece of heaven, it's good, but, that's not heaven, there is one heaven, and there is one God, whose presence, we'll enjoy forever, anything else, is futile, listen, if you have big, gardening plans, don't scrap them, because of today, but remember, we are people, called to sobriety, to not be delusional, to never forget, where our citizenship is, we are elect exiles, in this foreign land, what does it say here, verses 19, to 21, verse 20, he was foreknown, before the foundation, of the world, but was made manifest, in the last times, for the sake of you, for the sake of you, friends, you are ransomed, from your futility, not by things, that can fade, and never truly ransom, but by the very precious, blood of our sinless savior, the joy that was set, before him, he endured what, the cross for you, therefore we're born again, and this leads us, to our last point, verses 22, to the end, of chapter 2, verse 3, this is what it says, having purified your souls, by your obedience, to the truth, for a sincere brotherly love, love one another, earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living, and abiding word of God,

[ 33 : 31 ] I'll pause there, Peter now shifts, the subject, from our vertical, right living, before God, to our horizontal living, with each other, so being born again, means we are born, to a heavenly father, but also born, into a heavenly family, our social lives, are reordered, around a new thing, a new family, and it's the church, this is why, when people are hurt, by the church, it's not a little thing, it's a big thing, it's a very disastrous thing, and why we need to be people, again, in light of what God, has done for us, giving us his love, we are to love, one another, and do it properly, and when we mess up, what do we do, we ask for forgiveness, and we seek, to be reconciled, for God has reconciled us, for us that have been born, into Christian families, we have grown up, in the church, whatever your background, or experience was, hopefully good, maybe not, but, but, but, but, but, but, you've, by and large, had some kind of, um, ordering of your life, around the church, but for a, a first generation Christian, and on one hand, we're all first generation Christians, we need to make our faith, our own, but for somebody coming out, of a different faith, or a different philosophy, who has no other family, coming to faith, means they, quite possibly have, lost their existing family, and existing opportunities, and they're not talked to, anymore, by mom or dad, or the people, that they, used to count as friends, so when they come into the church, the church, better, by God's strength,

in light of what God has done, step up to the plate, has to, also tells us, that the Christian life, cannot be lived out, authentically, in isolation, if love is to mark the Christian, there has to be the object of love, and it can't just be, the head, who is Christ, it has to be his body, which is also Christ, third century,

Bishop St. Cyprian of Carthage, said, one cannot have God as father, without church as mother, the point is, you can't, you can't have this Christian life, authentically, without being connected, to a church, Peter reminds us, knowing that it's not easy, that we were born again, again, not by anything less, than the gospel of Christ, the gospel that is eternal, the gospel that will even outlive Rome, Peter is saying, what comes next, in light of the strength and power of Rome, the eternal empire, he says, all flesh is like grass, all its glory like the flower of grass, the grass withers, Rome will wither, Ottawa will wither, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever, friends, are, do we have a foundation built on something that will last, something that will endure, something that will not wither, do we have an eternal perspective, are we building our life on God's word, together, in light of what he has already done for us, you see,

Peter here, is commending his people, to love and love well, but, in light of the truth, of God's word, so, we see here that love and truth, are being bound together, the word of the Lord, and the love of God, that marks us, he continues on, verse 1 of chapter 2, so put away all malice, and all deceit, and hypocrisy, and envy, and all slander, the things that rip, communities apart, destroy relationships, but, what does he say then, he takes, he's saying, take it off, but also put something else on, like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it, you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted, that the Lord is good, he's, he's saying just briefly, that like a child needs, its mother's milk, or else it will die, have that mentality, with God's word, and the work of the Holy Spirit, in your life, and conforming your life, to the things that God calls you to, and not the futile things, be sober minded, have the mind of Christ, keep your mind on the things to come, taste and see that the Lord is good, friends, remember, indicative, of the indicatives of God, precede the imperatives, we are ransomed, we are redeemed, we are given new life, as elect exiles, and in light of that, let us then obey, with God's strength, and for God's glory, we are going to eat now, as well, it's compassion, as you say, if this is the country, as you know, the moment is not how we are, in light of it, along the wheels, are in light of life, with God's Unfree, as we ever try, as like Jill Schroro, and similarly, as this is what happens, yeah, when we are denying, unless anything, and I will come into, you are trying to doubleitute, I'm getting to know, that have to emphasize, but we are trying, part as we are feeding, this is always true, all coming into, as we're telling, as we are earning,