

Be Holy in All Your Conduct

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[0 : 00] Let us turn now to 1 Peter chapter 1, 1 Peter chapter 1, and reading at verse 10.

1 Peter chapter 1, verse 10. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 10.

In the things that have now been announced to you, through those who preach the good news to you, by the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

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.

1 Peter chapter 1, verse 10.

[1 : 43] What he had received in salvation. And as we already started looking at this particular letter, or certainly looking at this chapter, we see that Peter holds out the great hope to the believer.

That our future is so extraordinary, that imperishable, that undefiled, that future that will never, ever fade away.

And you know, for any person to live out their days in this world without Jesus Christ, must be living the most empty life possible.

While people may enjoy many good things in this world, and enjoy an element of happiness, and enjoy particular times and moments and experiences, and there will be fulfillments, there has to be, at the end of the Lord, if we don't have Christ.

Because, you see, there is a God-shaped void in the heart of every man. Man has been given a living soul. We're body, we're mind, we're soul.

[3 : 01] And even though our souls might be deadened, and even although our person might be living as just like the cattle, without any God-consciousness as such, yet there has to be an emptiness.

There has to be. And I'm sure that's part of the reason why there is so much despair in this world. Why people, so many people who have so much, they live as if they have nothing.

And that's one of the things that Peter is doing. He is focusing our mind and our heart upon what we do have. And as Christians, it's essential for us to keep going back to see what we have, what we've been given, what we have been enriched with.

That our lives are rich in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, this salvation that we have, this salvation that we have received by faith, is a salvation that has thrilled every generation.

And it's this salvation that the prophets we read about here, that they searched and they inquired carefully. You see, these Old Testament prophets, to a certain extent, they were examples to us of men who were searching and inquiring and probing into the word.

[4 : 32] Even although they were being given the word themselves, that word was being given to them, and we see that they realized that while this word was being given to them, it wasn't for them.

They were actually serving us. It's an amazing thought. These prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah and Zechariah and these who were given great prophecies about Jesus Christ.

They were actually serving us. And they were aware that it wasn't just for themselves, but that it was going way beyond that it was being for other generations.

And so, there was this searching we read there in the book of Daniel. Daniel, who was a man greatly beloved of God, who was given the most extraordinary visions.

Nobody else had these kind of visions apart from John, the Apostle John in the book of Revelation. And he was given these great visions, and yet he wanted to know.

[5 : 35] He wanted to know more. And the Lord is saying to him, no, these things are going to be closed away. It's not for you to know. Yes, we're told again in the book of Daniel there, that the wise, those who trust the Lord, those who are seeking the Lord, those who are seeking the enlightenment of the Spirit, that they will know, there will be a knowledge given to them.

They will understand. But they won't understand everything. You won't, I won't. We always want to know a lot more. And I'm sure that's true of all of us.

We'd say, you know, we should have greater understanding. Well, let us remember this. The Lord will open our understanding. And that's one of the great things that as we come to the Word, and particularly when we do this privately, and that's something we should all be in the habit of doing, is going to the Word privately and saying, Lord, open my mind.

Open my understanding. I want to really grasp what is being said here. And the greatest teacher we can have is the Holy Spirit.

And we've got to be asking the Lord, Lord, open my mind to see things. And sometimes you will see things in a way you never saw it before. And you say, I never saw it quite like that.

[6 : 58] And the Word can be opened. The Word that you know and you're familiar with, it can be opened at deeper and deeper and deeper levels. And it will satisfy you.

And you will say to yourself, there's nothing more satisfying than being round and under this Word. So here were these prophets, and they were being faithful to the Lord, and they were still searching. And they were, as I say, serving the Lord. But they knew that this Word was for way out in the future.

And again, that's something that we have to take on board. Because so often in our work, particularly our work for the Lord, we expect things to happen like that.

And the Church has often fallen into the trap of the world. Because we live particularly in this age of the instant.

[7 : 59] The demand of the world is, everything has to be instant. Our expectation today is that everything is instant. When do you want this for?

Yesterday. That's what people say. In other words, I want it instantly. Well, you go to the Bible, and that's not the way God works. Yes, He can. He can work so instantly that before we ask, He will answer.

But you will see that often. There is a time between the sowing and the reaping. There is a time between sowing and between the planting and the harvesting.

And we have to be careful that we don't become despondent, and we have to say to ourselves, you begin to pray for somebody, or you begin to witness for somebody, or you serve the Lord in some way, and you're saying to yourself, there's nothing happening.

And maybe you come to that conclusion after a week, or a month, or a year. But you look at the way the Lord works, and you look at His patience, and how He has gone so often, and He has worked so, so gradually, and so patiently.

[9 : 10] And we need to learn that. We need to take that on board. And I don't believe there's an age that's harder for us to grasp than the age in which we're living, which is placing so many demands upon us for this instant.

So the prophets searched the scripture diligently, but they're not the only ones who were searching, because it also tells us here that the very angels have an amazing interest in what is happening, because it tells us which things the angels long to look.

The angels who live in the presence of God, who understand the reality of God in a way that you and I cannot, yet these very angels have an incredible interest in the whole scheme of salvation. The very word that is used here is the idea of peeping in, of peering in, of somebody at a vantage point, somebody who is not being seen by those he is watching.

Here's somebody, and he's watching people. They're oblivious to the fact that they're being watched. And that's the idea that we have here, that that's what the angels are doing, that they're stooping in, that they're looking in, they're peering in to this salvation.

[10 : 32] And there's an element of amazement in them, that the King of Glory, the Son of God, should come into this world and become what he became for us.

And so there's this peering in, this amazement, as it were, amongst the angels. The angels are interested, my friend, in your life and in my life.

And do you know, when you came to faith in Jesus Christ, there was rejoicing in heaven. Isn't that a wonderful thought? One day, when you came into faith, when you were born again, there was euphoria and rejoicing and celebration amongst the angels in glory.

How do we react when someone is born again? When someone comes into the kingdom? Do we shrug our shoulders?

Do we say, ah, we'll see how long this will last? Or do we have this joy, this thrill? Well, let us remember, that's how it is with the angels. Because they are looking at what Christ has done. [11:52] And we should be looking as well and marvelling at that. But our text also shows us that our salvation is connected to Christ's suffering and subsequent glory.

Now, as we know, Christ didn't suffer for himself. There was not one bit of Christ's suffering that he ever suffered for himself. Christ didn't come into this world ever for himself.

He didn't walk one step in this world for himself. He did it all for you and for me. Isn't that an amazing thought? He who was rich, he became poor, poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich.

But you know, there was a glory attached to everything that Christ did. Even in his humiliation, there was a glory attached to it. There was a glory attached to his birth.

Remember how the angels sang at the time of his birth. There was a glory attached to everything. Even as he was growing up, there was something about, not that people were saying, ah, here's the Messiah.

[13:06] But there was, there was something about, he grew, we're told, in favor with God and with man. In other words, as Jesus was growing up as a boy, there was something about him that people were taking note of.

And then again, at his baptism, there was a glory attached to it as the Holy Spirit came upon him in the form of Adam. There was a glory displayed in all his life as the forces of nature were pushed back by him.

Where the wind had to, the wind dropped, the sea went calm. Even the dead had to give, even death had to give way before him.

When he spoke the word, arise, when he met that funeral procession, going out to the village of Nain, and there was that widow woman and there was her son, Jesus stopped the procession and said, arise.

By the grave of Lazarus, he commanded Lazarus to rise. In that home, where Jairus' home, Jairus' daughter, see, every force, every power was subject to him.

[14:20] The sea became his pavement as he walked across it. It was a glory attached to everything. The very forces of darkness had to bow before his presence.

They acknowledged him. You find that, for instance, with the likes of Legion, that the devils recognized. The devils are in fear. It tells us that in the Bible, that the devils fear and they tremble before him because they know the reality of him.

And so there was a glory attached to everything. There was a glory attached to his death. You remember how the scene of the cross was plunged into darkness?

Midday, the sun hides its face. At his death, there was earthquake and the rocks were pounding down the hillside. tells us of how graves were opened.

Even the centurion, that hardened man who was in charge of the execution, had to turn round and as he faced Jesus, he said, truly, this was the Son of God.

[15:30] Glory was attached to everything he did. Even in all his humiliation. Even into death, there was a glory. Because as we've often said before, as the word tells us, his body saw no corruption.

When we die, our bodies corrupt. That's one of the awful things about death that we have to put away from us those that we love.

The corruption. But that didn't happen with Jesus. Because there was a glory attached to everything. And of course, then there was a glory attached to everything that followed on. to his resurrection, to his ascension, to his heavenly session. And there's a glory attached to his returning again. And my friends, we are caught up in that glory.

Christ, salvation is by the way of the cross. And it is only as we look to Christ and what he has done upon that cross that we can be saved. And we in turn have to take up our cross and follow him.

[16:40] But that glory that belongs to him will fully be discovered when he returns again. And you know, my friends, it's not just a glory that we will behold.

That would be wonderful. If in heaven we were to behold his glory. We will. But we're going to go further than that. We're going to share in it. And that takes it to another level altogether.

So that the glory that is attached to his suffering and to what follows on is a glory, my friends, that we will enter into and become part of.

And it's little wonder that the apostle is so excited as he writes and he speaks to us about hope. But then Peter goes on and he says that's, that's what's happening.

That's how it is. So in light of that, how are we to live out our lives here? And he tells us then in verse 13, therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought so on.

[17 : 51] That you're preparing your mind for action. Literally, that is girding up the loins of your mind. That's how it's translated elsewhere. I suppose if we understand something of the New Testament time and of the long flowing robes that people wore, when they were going to be, when they were going to do any great activity, they used to wrap or pull up the robe they had and put it into their belt so that they had more freedom to move.

I suppose the idea is that when we're going to do something, we'll maybe take off our jacket and we'll roll up our sleeves so that we have more freedom of movement. We can get going. And that's kind of the idea here, that our minds are prepared.

There has to be this mental alertness, focus upon Christ. You see, this is what, it's not just to have our minds bright and sharp.

It's our mental alertness upon Christ, upon his return. This is, the New Testament is full of this, the return of Jesus.

And if our minds are full of the return of Jesus, it will affect how we live. If we knew, for instance, that Christ was going to come back this week, we would live differently to how we might be planning to live.

[19 : 16] It would have an impact because we would know that before the week was out, we were going to be standing in the presence of the King. and that the only thing that really matters is that we live to him and for him.

All other things would fall, would go down with regard to the priorities of life. And we would know that if we lived to him and for him, that everything else would naturally sort itself out.

That's actually how we are supposed to live. But it's far too often not how we do live. And so the apostles say, get you this mental alertness, prepare your minds for the glory that will be revealed, for the return of Jesus.

It's going to change everything. You see, our attitude to things determines our action. People will tell us that. The attitude that we have determines how we act.

And our attitude to Christ will affect how we live. day by day. If our focus is upon the Lord, it will sort, it will keep a balance in life.

[20 : 32] Many people have used the example of Abraham and Lot. Both good men, we've got to remember. But Abraham was this giant of faith.

His focus was upon the Lord. And although he was a wealthy man, and although he was surrounded by many great blessings, all these things were secondary to this one all important thing, his eyes were fixed upon the Lord.

And he was looking at the land all around, which God had promised him. But he was looking beyond the land, to the city whose builder and maker was God.

he had an eternal vision. We talk of 20-20 visions. Well, Abraham's vision was an eternal vision. He was seeing all the time through glasses that were focused upon eternity.

And that had a huge impact upon the way that Abraham lived. Lot, on the other hand, Lot had been to Egypt. And Lot got kind of sucked in to the ways of the world.

[21 : 41] And he began to enjoy some of the trappings of this world. And when the day came when Abraham and Lot were to make a choice, Abraham said to Lot, well, you choose.

And Lot looked up, and his choice was Sodom. Even although the place was spiritually and morally bankrupt, it was a good place.

It was like, it was all well watered and it was so fertile. He didn't make his decision spiritually. He made it by worldly, by a sort of a worldly decision.

Because he had been to Egypt and there was part of Egypt still in him. And he was losing his way. He had never stopped being a believer. But he had become, as it were, almost like a worldly believer.

And while initially Lot pitched his tent, we're told, set up his tent outside Sodom, it wasn't long until he was in the city and he became part of it.

[22 : 41] We find him in the gate of the city. And those who were in the gate of the city had a prominent place. And remember the impact that it had upon his family.

Abraham, on the other hand, he never lost the vision, never lost the sight. And you can see the blessing that came upon Abraham. You look at these two lives of Abraham and Lot.

And the New Testament tells us that Lot was a good man. And as he lived in Sodom, he was vetchted because of the conduct of the place. But he didn't leave it.

In fact, he had to be dragged out of it before the judgment came. And you see, Lot is a warning. We see what happened to his wife and we see what happened to his sons-in-law as they were left behind.

Abraham, on the other hand, brought by his life so much blessing upon his family. So that's why Peter is saying, God, you've got to get it right in your mind.

[23 : 47] Your mind has to be focused upon Christ. And again, you have the very idea of this girding up the loins. This is what was the picture that we have of how they ate the Passover, ready to leave Egypt in a hurry.

Be sober-minded. In other words, stay in control, stay controlled, steady, no excesses. We often tend to think of sobriety with being sober with regard to drink.

But in the Bible, it talks about life in general. In all areas, there has to be this kind of control, no excesses. And that's important, even when it goes back to our mind, to our attitude.

Because even in the good things in life, or in the difficult things in life, we can go either way. our attitudes can swing so that we can be just plunged into the depths.

Now, it might be very easy for me sometimes to say, the Christians shouldn't be in the depths.

Sometimes we are. But we've got to guard against it, because again it comes back to the attitude of mind and the focus upon Christ.

[25 : 07] And that's why there has to be like an even keel. The Christian is somebody who should be walking with a steadiness. That's what it means.

So that we're not going to extremes, whether it's in our mind, whether it's in our soul, it's how we live, and all these things. There should be this balanced. We talk of a balanced life.

The Christian ought to be living in a balanced way. That's really what Peter is saying here. And so our minds prepared and such like.

And then we're told, he goes on to talk about disobedience. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your form and ignorance, but as he who has called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conducts.

Since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy. Holiness is that which really separates God, well, it's not just what separates God, but if we were to think of God, one of the things that straight away we think about is his holiness, his separateness, his otherness, that which is distinctive about himself.

[26 : 25] But God says to his people, you're holy as well. Now, holy, of course, does mean being separate. Because the moment a person is born again, straight away that person is separated to God.

That's what happened when you became a Christian. Unknown to yourself, God separated you to himself. That's what happened. And then there is this growing awareness that you belong to God. So that there is this separateness has taken place. But then there is a growing likeness to the Lord. God. And that is why it's a total contradiction to ever hear a Christian say holiness doesn't matter. Holiness, I heard of that, but you don't need to be holy to be a Christian. Well, that's not what God says. God commands, be ye holy, for I am holy.

and I think it's in this very area we feel our own uncleanness, our own unworthiness. And the more we see, remember when we're looking at Isaiah 6, when Isaiah was given that vision of the holiness of God, that's when he fell down, oh woe me, for I am undone, I'm coming apart.

[27 : 49] I am a man of unclean lips. that's what we need to see, is the holiness of God, and if we do, it will change us, and it will give us that desire that we in turn would become holy as he is holy.

Let us pray. Oh Lord our God, we give thanks for this word and the encouragement that the word is. May we be challenged by it, and may we seek to grow, that the Holy Spirit will help us to grow in faith as we focus upon the word.

Help us Lord to move away from ourselves. May we in our own weakness lay hold upon thy strength, and may we discover more and more that this is the way the church moves forward, is in

its own weakness leaning and discovering God's strength.

Oh Lord, bless us and we pray, encourage us in our homes and families, encourage us in our faith, and help us to put our trust in thee at all times. Take us home safely, we pray, in Jesus' name we ask all.

Amen.