



1Peter - Lesson 1C

Chapter 1:13-25

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- We've reached mid-point in Chapter 1
 - And at this point, Peter is going to make a shift
 - If the first part of Chapter 1 could be described as encouragement to live in hope of our coming salvation
 - Then the second part would be described as exhortation to walk in holiness worthy of our salvation

1Pet. 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1Pet. 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,

1Pet. 1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;

1Pet. 1:16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

- Therefore...Peter says
 - Therefore...because we have been chosen for such an incredible salvation
 - Then we have an obligation to respond
 - And not just respond in any way, but in a specific way
 - Our response is holiness – holy living – righteous living in our thoughts and words and actions
- Peter begins by saying we must first prepare our minds for action
 - The phrase in Greek literally means gird your mind
 - The ordinary dress of Peter's day for a man was a long garment made of linen that reached to the ankles
 - So when decisive, forceful action was needed, a man would gird himself
 - He would pull up the hem of the garment and tie it off at the waist
 - So, girding the garment was always a preparatory step before active work or battle
 - So Peter says we should gird our minds
 - Get them ready for action, or make up your mind to act decisively
 - We know that holiness in any form depends on having the Holy Spirit in us by faith
 - Apart from the Spirit, we cannot hope to achieve any measure of holiness
 - But understanding that, our first step in seeking the holiness the Father requires is to obtain a mindset to seek holiness
 - It doesn't come by chance or luck or wishful thinking
 - We must mentally assent (agree) that holiness is in fact our goal
 - It's remarkable to me how often in our culture we teach people to set a

goal, organize themselves, prepare, plan, and take the steps necessary to realize your dreams

- We make a science out of self-help – to achieve great things
- But when Christians hear the Bible reminding them of the need to seek holiness because that's what pleases our Lord
 - So often the Christian will throw their hands up and say I just can't do it
 - It's beyond my ability – nonsense

Rom. 6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Rom. 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Rom. 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

Rom. 6:13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Rom. 6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

- Paul isn't saying that we're guaranteed holiness
 - But likewise he doesn't say there is no hope of holiness
 - Before we were a believer, we could not do anything holy or righteous or pleasing to God
 - Bringing meals to that sick neighbor
 - But even when we did the things we thought were good, it's still sin\
 - Previously, our only motivation was the flesh – sinful desires
- But from God's perspective they gave Him no credit and thus by definition they are sin
 - This is what Isaiah means when he said even our good works are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6)
- When we are called to set our minds on holiness, the Holy Spirit is the means by which to accomplish that command
 - The first step is to set our minds to it
- The second step Peter commands of the believer is to remain sober in verse 13
 - Being sober is really a reference to controlling lusts
 - The NASB adds the phrase sober "in spirit"
 - The NIV says be self-controlled, which may be closer to the meaning, though the word in Greek means to abstain from wine
 - Obviously Peter's command includes refraining from too much alcohol, but that's just one way we remain sober
 - I think Peter is saying literally remain sober in the sense of remaining in

control of the flesh generally

- I think this fits Peter's point better
- We are to prepare our minds for action while controlling our flesh's desire
 - It's a two-prong attack on sin
 - The war is now between Spirit and flesh
- Fasting can be a good tool to understanding these warring parties
 - But how can fasting help us spiritually?
 - Eating is one of the strongest urges of our bodies
 - Imagine setting your mind on choosing one day this week not to eat – no food, just water
 - I'm certain that by lunchtime, or for some stalwarts maybe around dinner time, you're gonna start to feel hungry
 - You'll have this overwhelming urge to eat – in fact it will dominate your thoughts
 - But we'd made up our mind, why are we struggling?
 - Our flesh has its own power within the body, that is distinct from our cognitive thoughts
 - The flesh has a will of its own that influences our mind and influences our spirit
- But it can be disciplined, and it takes practice
 - When we place our minds and our flesh in their proper perspective, God is inclined to bring about our success
- And then with the mind ready for action, the flesh under control, set your hope on the grace to be revealed with Christ
 - The writer of Hebrews echoes this thought

Heb. 6:18 ...we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

- We who have already taken refuge – in Christ, in the New Covenant – are already in faith, but still must take hold of the hope before us
 - Of achieving things we never thought possible with Christ living in us, for achieving holiness in our lives
 - These believers should take hold of the hope set before them
 - In other words, it is possible for believers to lose sight of the certainty of their salvation, to fear needlessly
 - The encouragement is to prepare your mind, take control of your flesh, and take hold of the hope
- Instead of remaining ignorant, Peter says in v15, be like the One who called you
 - We are moving into the why
 - We were the ones that God selected to be in His family

- Therefore, we have a responsibility, an obligation to live our lives in honor to Him
- And Peter quotes Leviticus 19:2 to prove his point
 - Be Holy because your Father is holy
 - Peter shows a remarkable reverence for the Old Testament, probably because of his Jewish audience
 - He quotes about as many Old Testament verse in his short letter as the writer of Hebrews quotes in his much longer letter
 - Only Revelation quotes more Old Testament scripture than 1 Peter
- In Leviticus 19, the context of the chapter is how Israel will enjoy fellowship with God
 - If the nation of Israel expected to enjoy the fellowship of God, then He required they be Holy
 - Holiness is the ticket to the dance
 - We can't enter into God's presence unless and until we are holy as He is holy
 - So, Peter is invoking the memory of Leviticus 19 to remind his readers that fellowship with God depends on holiness
- I think there is some misconception on what holiness means
 - In absolute terms we're talking about perfection
 - We must be perfect to enter into God's presence
 - The word means "set apart," as in set apart from sin, to be specific
 - So our position before God with respect to our righteousness must be perfect
 - We must have no defect when we stand before God
 - At the moment of our salvation, we have been granted positional holiness before God by Christ's atonement
 - And we will then experience fellowship with God in His presence made possible by Christ
 - This is why we can say with confidence that absent the body is to be present with Christ
 - Because there is nothing more any of us can do to improve on what Christ has already done
 - We are already perfect in God's eyes, because when He looks upon us, He sees His Son standing in our place
- That's one sense of being holy, but holiness is also a call to God's people today
 - We are supposed to yield to the Holy Spirit allowing Him to lead us into holy living now

Heb. 10:14 because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

- The same power that perfected us will sanctify us – bring us to holiness lived out
- Why?
 - Well first, for the same reason as Leviticus 19
 - If we desire a close abiding fellowship with our Lord even now, then we only need to seek holiness to find it
 - Our relationship in Christ is based on faith, not performance
 - But our enjoyment of that relationship has everything to do with obedience
 - If you want some proof of what I say, try living in complete disobedience and disregard for your spouse's wishes
 - Do this for even a little while and watch what effect it has on the marriage and your relationship
 - Now the marriage itself doesn't automatically dissolve just because we disobey
 - Similarly our covenant in Christ isn't dissolved when we disobey
 - But the fellowship suffers
 - And then we mope and whine about how we can't sense Christ's presence in our lives
 - He's still where He always was...we're the ones who have moved away
 - He won't leave us or forsake us, but when we place distance between ourselves and Him by virtue of our disobedience, we'll feel the effect
 - The second reason we are to seek holiness now is that we might bring Him glory for the work He has done in our hearts

Matt. 5:16 “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- Our present experience should be marked by a life lived in holiness to the glory of Christ's name
 - This is a response based in decisive thought, purposeful action, hopeful expectation, fearful reverence
 - It is a response that understands the magnitude of what's at stake
 - Of how our eternal reward is on the line
 - Of how our choices and decision here and now bring with them eternal consequences
 - And most of all, it is a reflection of our faith in and love for our Lord
 - As the Apostle John writes:

1John 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1John 2:4 The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His

commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1John 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

1John 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

- Then Peter turns up the heat a little more on his readers

1Pet. 1:17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;

1Pet. 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,

1Pet. 1:19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

1Pet. 1:20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

1Pet. 1:21 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.

- Verse 17 opens with the particle "if" in my translation
 - It's the word *ei* in the Greek, expressed in the first class condition which means something that is true and leads to a condition conclusion
 - In other words, it means since
 - Since they call God their Father
 - Because as believers they do call God Father
 - Peter says not only is He your father, true enough
 - But He is the impartial judge
 - The word for judge – *krino* – suggests judging with the intent to find some good
 - Not judge in the sense of condemn
 - Think of it like a judge at a science fair
 - Our Father is also our Judge
 - He will evaluate our works, Peter says, looking for what we did good
 - Peter is describing passing the Judgment Seat of Christ
 - Paul also mentions this coming moment of judgment for all believers

2Cor. 5:8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

2Cor. 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

2Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- There is a test, and it comes upon our death
 - And it is a moment when we are judged for all we have done – both good and bad
 - Now how are we to take such a statement?
 - Or the statement in Peter's letter saying we will be judged for our works?
 - What about Paul's teaching in Romans 8 that:

Rom. 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- Or the Psalmist:

Psa. 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

- How can we be judged for our bad in such a moment?
 - Well, the answer is we all have bad "works"
 - Things that were done supposedly in the name of Christ or under the banner of faith
 - Yet we did them for ourselves
 - We did them with false motives, selfish desires, independent of what God Himself was directing us to do
 - Remember the example from the Gospels when Jesus admonished the Pharisees for how they practiced works of righteousness like prayer

Matt. 6:5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

- We do things like this all the time
 - And when we stand before Christ, we will be reminded of those errors
 - And they will be burned up, so to speak
 - Only our truly holy works will remain
 - Those things we did under direction of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of Christ and the benefit of the saints
 - And there will be plenty of saints who made their mark in quiet humble ways who will receive great reward in the next age

- And I suspect there will be plenty of those who see far less than they expected
- So Peter says if you understand that this One you affectionately call Abba, Father, is also your judge in Christ
 - Then the only appropriate attitude we should have while we wait
 - Knowing that the moment of judgment is coming...
 - The only appropriate attitude is fear
 - Not merely reverence and awe as some define it, but also healthy measure of concern and even apprehension

Heb. 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- We can't sugar coat this...there is a day of reckoning for everything
 - And though we don't fear condemnation
 - We should fear the eternal consequences for sinful choices and determined disobedience when we had a call on our lives to do otherwise
- And if fear weren't enough motivation, Peter reminds us of what it required for God to redeem us in the first place
 - In verse 18 Peter says that we weren't redeemed with gold or silver from the life we inherited from our forefathers
 - The life of sin that marks any descendent of Adam
 - We weren't redeemed with things that are perishable
 - Once again, Peter places the value of this world in its proper perspective
 - Instead we were redeemed with the blood of His Son
 - Here's what Peter is saying
 - If you won't be holy because you have been granted such a marvelous salvation
 - And if you won't live in holiness even though God has said be Holy as He is holy
 - And if you won't seek holiness even though your eternal reward is on the line
 - Then at least seek holiness on the basis that God was willing to put his perfectly holy Son to death in your place
 - Peter can't make a greater appeal than that
 - The next time you consider giving in to one of those lusts or temptations that dog you from time to time
 - To cut that person off in traffic in anger
 - To underestimate your taxes in greed
 - To take a lingering look at the attractive person in lust
 - To hide your true circumstances in deceit
 - Remember that Christ died because you did those things

- That those actions resulted in the death of the one you now call Lord and Savior
 - A Savior who was foreknown, meaning existent, before the foundations of the world
 - But who appeared and died for the sake of you and I
- And yet in that moment, there you are preparing to make the same mistake again
 - Gird your mind and decide to change your ways, Peter says

1Pet. 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,
1Pet. 1:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

1Pet. 1:24 For,

**“ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,
 AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.
 THE GRASS WITHERS,
 AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,**

1Pet. 1:25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.”

And this is the word which was preached to you.

- To those who have been purified through obedience to the truth (meaning belief in the gospel)
 - Turn to one another in love
 - Peter’s giving an essential ingredient for success in the pursuit of holiness
 - If the church is going to succeed in pursuing holiness, then it needs one another
 - We aren’t supposed to do this alone – we can’t
 - The love of our brothers and sisters in Christ is absolutely critical to growth and maturing of the body
 - And we entered into this new Body of believers on the basis of the word of God
 - An imperishable word, a living word, a word that will never perish
 - And since we were born of that seed, we take our new character from the character of the one who gave birth to us
 - Like the Word who gave us a new birth
 - We are to be imperishable
 - We have a living eternal hope that will never perish
 - And like the seed that renewed us into this new life, we are to love
 - As Jesus loved us, we are to love one another
 - And by that love, the Body of Christ will have the strength to glorify God by our holiness

- In the weeks to come, this pattern repeats itself
 - Peter shows our obligation and desire to please our Lord
 - And then he reminds us of the specific ways that obligation and desire should manifest itself