

A Holy Life

1 Peter 1:13-17

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the statue of Edward, Prince of Wales, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #10220.
 - 1. We can become just like that in our lives — we can be so covered with dirt and grime that no one knows there is something beautiful under there.
 - 2. We need to rid ourselves of dirt and grime and be spiritually clean.
 - a. “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).
 - b. “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).
 - c. “Since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness” (2 Pet. 3:11).
- B. The apostle Peter wrote about holiness in detail in his first epistle.
 - 1. This evening, we want to examine the “Holy Life” of which Peter wrote.
 - 2. That “Holy Life” can be divided into three parts — a holy mind, a holy obedience, and a holy fear.

A HOLY MIND, v. 13

- A. “Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
- B. The “therefore” points back to verse 12.
 - 1. Thus, these Christians were to be holy in light of the gospel preached to them through the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Because we have obeyed the Gospel, we need to be a holy people.
 - a. We have been called to live differently after our conversion than before our conversion — “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).
 - b. Are you living differently than before your conversion? Are you walking in “newness of life”?
- C. Peter encouraged these Christians to gird up their minds.
 - 1. In the ancient world, men wore long robes, and when they needed to move quickly, they would gird these robes by tucking them in their belt.
 - 2. Although the Old Testament often spoke of the girding up on one’s loins, the allusion here may be to the Passover.
 - a. “In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover” (Ex. 12:11).
 - b. Peter borrows from Passover imagery in v. 19; he speaks of Jesus as “a lamb without blemish or spot.”
- D. Peter encouraged these Christians to be sober.
 - 1. Sobriety in the ancient world did not mean merely the absence of alcohol; it meant to behave as a non-intoxicated person, to act with dignity and self-control.
 - 2. We must be people who “keep our heads on straight,” people who act with dignity and self-control.
 - a. We cannot allow the things in this world to cloud our thinking; we dare not lose sight of the things in this world that are truly important and the things in the next life that are even more important.
 - b. Are you sober in your thinking?
- E. Peter encouraged these Christians to set their hope fully upon the grace that would be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. The grace to be revealed at the coming of Jesus Christ is obviously our heavenly home and eternal life.
 - 2. Thus, Peter encourages these Christians not to set their hope on things of this earth, but on things that will endure in eternity.
 - a. So many times we place our confidence on things on this earth — getting the new car, getting the plasma TV, wearing the latest fashions, being at the top of our class academically.
 - b. There’s nothing wrong with those things in and of themselves, but we must put our confidence and our hope on things that will outlast this world — the grace to be revealed when Jesus comes.
- F. Peter tells these Christians to clean up their minds.
 - 1. We have difficulty keeping clean minds in the modern world.
 - a. Television brings illicit sex, greed, filthy talk, and everything else opposed to godliness into our homes.
 - b. As we drive down the road, certain drivers may make it difficult to keep a clean mind, billboard may

- call to our baser desires, the radio may bring about improper images.
 - c. At work, coworkers may tell jokes we did not hear or use language Christians dare not use.
- 2. We must keep our minds clean and holy.
 - a. We need to be extremely cautious about the television we watch — we may need to reject certain programming.
 - b. We may need to avoid certain radio stations or even certain parts of town that dirty up our minds.
 - c. We may need to avoid certain coworkers or the lounge to make certain that our minds are kept pure.

A HOLY OBEDIENCE, vv. 14-16

- A. As obedient children, these disciples were not to conform themselves to the former lust, as in their ignorance, v. 14.
 - 1. The image of Christians as children goes back to v. 3 where Peter refers to God as “father” and speaks of Christians having been “begotten again.”
 - 2. These Christians were not simply to be “children” but they were to be “obedient children.”
 - a. A child’s obedience to his or her parents was greatly valued, and Roman law, as well as Jewish law, required children to be obedient to parents.
 - b. Christians are to be obedient to God.
 - 1) When Jesus was teaching and was informed that his mother and siblings had come to see him, he said, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it” (Lk. 8:21).
 - 2) “This is love, that we walk according to His commandments” (2 Jn. 6).
 - 3. These Christians were not to conform to their former lust, as in their ignorance.
 - a. Peter tells these Christians that they must live differently once they have come to Christ than the way they lived beforehand.
 - b. Paul does say that when we were raised at our baptism we were raised to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).
- B. As the One who had called them is holy, they were to be holy in all their conduct, for it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy,” vv. 15-16.
 - 1. If Peter does continue the image of a parent and child here, he may be stressing the childlike quality of imitation.
 - a. What child doesn’t think that his father is the strongest and best dad on the planet? And, what child doesn’t want to be exactly like daddy or just like mommy?
 - b. This could very well be Peter’s point here: God is your father, and you need to imitate him in his holiness just as children imitate their parents.
 - 2. The Israelites had been called upon to be holy on account of God’s holiness: “I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44).
 - 3. Peter uses that Old Testament background to call upon these Christians to be holy just as God is holy.
 - 4. They were to be holy in all their conduct.
 - a. The word “all” in Greek means, basically, each and every — the idea is that every single area of these Christians’ lives was to be holy.
 - b. Should we not strive to be holy in every aspect of our lives as well?
- C. The early church faced much opposition from the pagans.
 - 1. Pagans claimed that Christians were incestuous because they referred to one another as “brother” and “sister.” They also claimed Christians were cannibals because they ate the “body” and the “blood” of the Lord.
 - 2. In order to combat that error, Christian apologists called attention to the high moral character of Christians.
 - a. Notice what Justin Martyr, the most famous of the second century apologists, wrote: “We who formerly rejoiced in fornication now embrace self-control alone. We who employed magical arts now have dedicated ourselves to the good and unbegotten God. We who loved more than anything else ways of acquiring wealth and possessions now bring what we have into a common treasury and share with everyone who is in need. We who hated and murdered one another and would not show hospitality to those not of the same tribe on account of different customs now after the coming of Christ eat with others, pray for our enemies, and attempt to persuade those who hate us unjustly so that those who live according to the good counsels of Christ may share with us the things hoped for from God the Lord of all” (Apology I).
 - b. Justin basically says, “Look, we don’t act the way the rest of humanity acts: look at the way we live.”
 - c. What if pagans were to attack the church today? Could your behavior help to put down the attacks, or would your behavior fuel their attacks?

A HOLY FEAR, v. 17

- A. “If you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.”
- B. Peter says some important things about God here:
 - 1. He says that we can call upon God.
 - a. That’s the obvious implication in “If you call on the Father.”
 - b. If we could not call upon God, pray to him, why would Peter speak of being able to do so as a reality?
 - 2. God judges without partiality — at the Judgment, God isn’t going to show preference to one group of people over another; God will be fair.
 - 3. God judges according to each one’s work — God will judge us according to our deeds, our works.
- C. But, Peter’s focus in this passage and the focus of our sermon are on Christian behavior. Peter says to conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear.
 - 1. Peter tells us how to act during our stay here.
 - a. That language implies that we do not belong here.
 - b. In fact, one of the main themes of 1 Peter is that Christians are pilgrims and sojourners on this earth: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1:1).
 - 2. You know that we do not belong on this earth.
 - a. “Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior” (Phil. 3:20).
 - b. “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through.”
 - 3. We are to live our lives in fear.
 - a. “Fear” in the biblical usage generally means “reverence” and that’s the meaning here.
 - b. The idea is that while we live on this earth, we need to act out of reverence and honor of God.
 - c. Do you respect and honor and reverence God in your life?