

3. Learning Why We Want to Live a Holy Life

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to rejoice even when they are going through times of testing. We best help them to learn that lesson as they see us rejoice when we are going through difficult times of testing. In order to be filled with joy during those times of testing, we must have faith that the Lord is working through what is happening in our lives to complete His will. That faith will grow stronger as we make it our goal to live lives that are holy and pleasing to the Lord because we will be walking by faith.

That is why 1 Peter 1:13-16 says, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” In Israel and the surrounding nations, the people would commonly wear long robes. However, when they were getting ready to travel, they would use a leather belt to tie those robes close to their bodies so that the robes would not hinder their travel. Peter used that familiar activity and encouraged the Christians to apply that activity to their thoughts. We see that Peter encouraged them and us to focus our thinking on the grace that we as Christians will receive at the coming of Christ. Our thinking is the thing that determines our actions.

The word that is translated “be sober” means “*to think clearly and exercise self-control so that we can act to please the Lord.*” The word is used in I Thessalonians 5:8 where we read, “But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.” Here, we see that such thinking will strengthen our faith, love and hope. Since the Christians to whom Peter was writing were going through a time of severe testing and persecution, Peter encouraged them to rest their hope fully on the grace that they would receive at the time that Christ returns to take us to heaven. Here, we see that when we live with an eternal focus in our lives we will see any suffering in this world from a different viewpoint. Paul said in Romans 8:18, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” The suffering that we experience on this earth is just for a moment when we are focused on the eternal glory to which we look forward.

When we have our attention on that eternal glory, it also changes the way that we act on this earth. It will be our desire to be obedient children of the Lord because we want to please Him. Before we placed our faith in Christ, we lived to please ourselves. That meant that we followed our sinful lusts and lived in sin. As we think about the eternal glory that Christ has for us, we begin to think and act differently. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” We followed our sinful lusts because of our lack of knowledge of spiritual things. Paul said in Ephesians 4:17-18, “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Here, we see that ignorance speaks of the spiritual blindness that controlled our lives before Christ gave us new life.

Now, we see that Christ has called us to Himself and encourages us to follow His example and live a holy life. Christ calls us to be holy in all of our conduct. Ephesians 4:22-23 says, “That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” Here, we see that the key to changing our conduct or actions is to change our thinking. Once we become Christians, it is possible because we are able to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. We also have an example to follow because God invites us to follow His example when He says, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

1 Peter 1:17-19 goes on to say, “And 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; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Those who call on the Father are those who have placed their faith in Christ.

These verses teach us a key lesson about the character of God. We see that God judges each person's work without partiality. For the person that is not a Christian, that person will be judged by his or her sinful works and will receive eternal judgment for those works. However, as Christians, our sins have been blotted out and so our works will be judged impartially to see what works can be rewarded. 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 says, “If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” As God judges impartially, all of our works that have eternal value will be rewarded. All of our works that were only for this earth will be burned. Every person that becomes a Christian will be saved but those who have no works of eternal value will see all of their works burned. As a result, we want to do works that have eternal value.

We only live on this earth for a short period of time compared to eternity. As a result, we only have this short period to do works that will receive eternal rewards. That is why we are told to live this time with godly fear. Philippians 2:12-13 says, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.” Here, we are reminded that God has worked in our lives. Now, we are to let that salvation impact the lives of others as we seek to please God. Because of His great love for us, we have a godly fear that causes us to want to serve Him with reverence and love so that we can do His will.

We have this godly reverence and love because we realize that Christ did not pay the penalty to redeem us from our bondage to sin with silver or gold. Before we received that gift of life from Christ by faith, our life was a life that was filled with aimless conduct (sinful behavior). This sinful behavior had been passed down to us by our ancestors because their lives had also been controlled by sin. Because of that sin, we were prisoners of Satan. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” We could not escape that bondage. Instead, we needed One who would redeem us from that bondage by paying the price.

The price to redeem us was very high. In fact, the price that Christ paid to set us free from the penalty of our sin was His precious blood. John 1:29 says, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” Christ was the perfect sacrifice who could redeem us from sin because He was without blemish and without spot. As a result, we want to live a holy life that pleases God because Christ paid the price to redeem us from our sin with His own blood. We want to respond to His great love by pleasing Him.

1 Peter 1:20-21 says, “He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” The word that is translated “foreordained” means “*to foreknow or to know in advance.*” Here, we see that before Adam and Eve were ever created God knew that they would sin. As a result, God planned to redeem us from sin by the blood of Christ before the first sin was even committed. This also reminds us of the greatness of the love of God because He made the plan to redeem us from our bondage to sin long before there was sin.

Although that plan was made before creation, Christ did not appear until these last times to carry out that plan to redeem us. It is through this payment by Christ that it is possible for us to come to God and believe in Him. God, the Father, is the One who raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory to show that He was satisfied with the payment that Christ made for sin. 1 John 2:1-2 says, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means “*to be satisfied.*” The Father was satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins and showed that satisfaction by raising Christ from the dead and giving Him glory.

It is that payment for our sin that makes it possible for us to have our faith and hope in God. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others how to receive this faith and hope. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Our children can learn to lead others to faith in Christ as they learn to share the Gospel from the Word of God with others. Hope is the confident assurance of our eternal salvation, which is the result of that faith. We want to help our children learn to share that hope described in Titus 2:13, “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” As our children learn to explain these things to others, they can also experience the joy that comes from sharing with others the joy that they can have through life in Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why we want to live a holy life.