

Sermon: Be Holy!

Text: I Peter 1:13-21

Gary L. Wackler

July 20, 2008

Introduction: [I Peter 1:13-21 \(NIV\)](#) ¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” ¹⁷Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. ¹⁸For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

To be a part of “The Coming Salvation” (sermon from last week), one has to “Be Holy” in his conduct. What does it mean to be holy?

We are in a war that is like no other. It is cosmic in scope and eternal in consequences. It requires God’s people to be ready for the “coming salvation.”

The requirements are revealed in God’s strategy for all of us who follow Him.

I. Our Minds Must Be Prepared (v. 13).

Verse 13 in the KJV sounds funny in our ears today:

[I Peter 1:13a \(KJV\)](#) ¹³Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

The Greek word, *prepare*, (*αναζωονυμι*) “refers to the habit of the Orientals, who quickly gather up their loose robes w. a girdle or belt when in a hurry or starting on a journey. This is because the easterners’ long flowing robes would impede physical activity unless tucked under the belt.” (RWP; Best - in Rienecker, p. 747)

Our minds must be prepared ...

A. For Action

The text indicates that this preparedness as Christians is for a reason. It indicates more than just intellectual readiness. It is that part of a Christian's mind that understands what "proper conduct" is, and is ready to do it.

B. For Self-Discipline

Again the older translations use the word "sober." There should be a moral and ethical seriousness to the Christian walk. This word (νηφω) is usually talking about self-control and clarity of mind.

I Thessalonians 5:6, 8 (NIV) ⁶So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

People who get drunk can, and often, do "foolish" things. They engage in actions that they later regret. The Apostle Paul in the Thessalonian letter is not talking about drinking alcohol to excess, but assimilating the perspectives of the world that are devoid of consideration of God.

You have heard of the acronym S.A.D.D. and a person being A.D.D. I think much of the world has S.A.D.D. (Spiritual Attention Deficit Disorder). Many of the maladies of the world are the result of its inhabitants only thinking about themselves and forgetting God and others - and our obligations to them.

Peter uses this same word (here translated *self-discipline*, sober in KJV) later when he says: **I Peter 4:7 (NIV)** ⁷The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

I Peter 5:8 (NIV) ⁸Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

C. For Christ's Coming

There is a time soon when Jesus will be revealed at his second coming. Christians are to be full of hope and vigilant. We should be ready to go to our *true* home at a moment's notice. As Christians, when times get tough, we have a sure hope of better days ahead because our Lord is coming back for his own.

set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

In the Greek text the word translated “to be given” (φερω) could be rendered “that is being brought” (or even carried) and the writer sees this gift of Jesus’ coming as an event in process and “the object of their hope is already virtually within his reader’s grasp” (Kelly quoted by Rienecker, p. 747).

In our quest to be holy ...

II. Training Is Critical for Success (vv. 14-17).

Peter gives further instruction for the serious follower of Christ when he says...

A. Do not conform to evil desires (v. 14).

You cannot be an effective Christian by giving in to the life-plan of the world and the “prince” of that dominion which is the Devil. This would be what disobedient children do, and Peter has higher expectations for the Church (his little children).

As Christians we have been enlightened. We have been shown a better way. We now have both the knowledge and the power to live for God.

I John 2:15-17 (NIV) ¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

B. Practice holiness (vv. 15-16).

There is both a negative and positive aspect to holiness. Certainly there is the idea of being *separate* from evil and sin in our behavior. The positive side of holiness is that we are to live righteous lives always with the understanding that what we do can honor God.

How we relate to others will define whether we are indeed holy or not.

1. Remember your calling.

Do you remember when you gave your life to Jesus and you promised to live for Him? How is that going?

2. Use the best example(s)

God certainly is our best example of how we ought to relate to each other and ultimately to Him. Look at Jesus for your examples. Study the Bible and see what it is we all need to do. Lean on the power of the Holy Spirit to order your priorities in life.

You'll notice that Peter uses a Father-child image throughout this text. It is always natural for a "good" child to want to both obey and imitate his parent(s).

C. Remember to Whom you report (v. 17).

Wayne Grudem tries to clear up any misconceptions: "Membership in God's family, great privilege though it is, must not lead to the presumption that disobedience will pass unnoticed or undisciplined." (Grudem, *I Peter*, p. 81)

The Church dare not take the deadly attitude of special privilege or entitlement much like the religious leaders of Jesus' time who counted on their connection to Abraham.

Peter goes on to say: **live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.**

We are sojourners; this world is not our home. It is a temporary residence at best. While we are here though, our conduct is very important. (Compare *anastrophe* (way of life) to *catastrophe* (destruction)).

III. The Battle Plan Was Well-Thought (vv. 18-21).

A. The Plan was at great cost (vv. 18-19).

What was the cost of our salvation? It was at the cost of the blood of Jesus. We were ransomed, bought back like a slave from our former owner and set free to serve our new Master.

Jesus' life, given for us, was absolutely "perfect."

Peter says: **you were redeemed from the empty way of life** - literally "out of (ek) vain conduct. The Preacher of Ecclesiastes tells us everything is vanity without God. And without God everything you do and accomplish will prove temporary at best. It is only what we do *for* God that will last!

B. The Plan has stood the test of time (v. 20).

Q. How early did God think about our lives and the possibility of our being with Him forever?

A. From before creation. He knew us before we were known by anyone (Psalm 139). The entire Bible (OT & NT) is a story that has been called “God’s Scheme of Redemption.” God was Redeemer before He was Creator!

C. The Plan has been proven successful (v. 21).

God’s plan to redeem His creation was carried out in the person of Jesus. He came to earth, willingly died, was buried, resurrected bodily from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father.

D. The Plan has visible results in the Church (v. 21).

[21Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.](#)

God’s plan has produced both faith and hope in me - and you, if you are a Christian. In the middle of living a sojourner’s life and sometimes in the midst of suffering, we believe in Jesus and what He has done for us. We also believe that the best is yet to come.

[Ephesians 1:17-23 \(NIV\)](#) ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Conclusion: There are many ways to succeed in this world. There are many paths that can be followed to obtain so-called success. But there is only one way to be successful in the world to come. You must follow the right Leader (Jesus).

God says you must plan, train and execute His eternal plan if you truly want to experience life.

“The God whom Christians fear is also the God whom they trust for ever, the God who has planned and done for them only good from all eternity” (Wayne Grudem, *I Peter*, p. 87).

Adapted story from *Craddock Stories*, pp. 119-120

Fred Craddock had a student years ago by the name of Jim Strain. He wrote screenplays. He lived out in California, and after several years of starving to death, he was able to sell some. He had written some movie screenplays and all that. He was in Craddock’s class on the parables of Jesus, and he said to Fred, “Everything I do reflects that class.” He wrote a screenplay for the old TV drama called M*A*S*H.

You remember M*A*S*H*, that hospital in Korea and all the characters, doctors and nurses in that military hospital? There was a chaplain in that M*A*S*H unit who was a priest, a Catholic priest. And Jim wrote, he wrote a play involving the priest. And here was the story.

The priest at some point became very attracted to one of the nurses -- he was really attracted to that nurse. He had taken the vows of his priesthood, of poverty, chastity, obedience. He was attracted to that nurse. And Jim said that the whole story was about that struggle, that struggle, and finally he says no to her and reaffirms his yes to God. Jim said to Craddock, “I had an awful time selling that script.”

“If you’d just change the ending, make it more realistic,” they said.

“What would make it more realistic?”

“He goes for the nurse! He disavows his priesthood! Don’t you understand what people want?” they countered.

And Jim said, “No.”

Don’t you understand what people want?

Lord, help us to be holy. Help us to want to be holy by Your power. Help us to want what you want! - In Jesus Name, Amen