

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, June 26, 2019 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

1 PETER & 2 PETER

FULL of Hope FULL

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF TIMES OUT OF YOUR WORST OF TIMES



STAYING CLEAN IN A POLLUTED WORLD – PART 2

1 Peter 1:13-21

We began our study through 1 and 2 Peter weeks ago entitled **“Full of Hope-full: How to Make the Best of Time Out of Your Worst of Times.”** The question is how do I develop that kind of life and faith that enable me to be full of “hope-fullness” even in the midst of the “worst of time”... in times of hardship, suffering, and the struggles of this life or as in the case of those in Peter’s day, extreme persecution. That is where First Peter comes in. The Christian life is an overcoming life. Even though we will definitely have problems and personal struggles in this life (trials of many kinds), we will be able to overcome because of Jesus. Because of Him, we have victory over the world, including sinful habits, bitterness, loneliness, guilt, fear, and discouragement. God desires for you to live an overcoming life! Jesus, Himself, said in **John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”** And in 1 John 5:4-5, **“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”** Christians are overcomers and truly are to live hope-filled Christian lives every day, but let’s be honest, there are many trial and struggles, heartaches and difficulties along... times of suffering that can daily rob us of our joy and paralyze our faith, steal our hope, and destroy our relationship and weaken our walk... times of suffering can embitter and defeat us if we let it. 1 Peter was written to help believer’s believe and grow even in times of suffering... to be “Full of Hope-full.”

Before we study the details of this fascinating letter... one of only two books in all of the Bible written by Jesus closest disciples and a leader of the disciples, and both very short... before we get into our study let’s be reminded of some of the most important background information for the book.

5 Important Background Information for the Book of 1 Peter:

1. **The author of the book of 1 Peter is the APOSTLE PETER, the head and lead spokesman for Jesus' twelve disciples** - The New Testament had four different names for Peter: Simeon (the Hebrew for Peter's original name, Acts 15:14, 2 Peter 1:1), Simon (the Greek name for Simeon applied 49 times in the New Testament), Cephas (a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic word for rock [$\kappa\eta\phi\alpha\varsigma$]; this is used to play off of $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\alpha$), Peter ($\Pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\varsigma$) the leader and spokesman for the early disciples. This is how he is addressed in the greeting emphasizing his authority to speak. The early New Testament Church almost exclusively regarded Peter as the author of the letter. And of course there is the internal evidence supporting Peter's authorship, the letter claims to be from "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:1), the writer claims to be the readers "fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed" (1 Peter 5:1), the writer identifies "Silas" (Silvanus) as one who helped him to write the letter (1 Peter 5:12; see also Acts 15:22 and 1 Thessalonians 1:1), the writer also sends greetings from Mark (1 Peter 5:13; see Acts 12:12).
2. **The book of 1 Peter (like Paul's letter to the Galatians) is actually a CIRCULAR LETTER, meant to be circulated to multiple early New Testament churches and believers** - Peter is a letter written in normal epistle form and style. The rhetorical and didactic nature of the letter may mean that it was intended to be read aloud to the congregations. It is best to see this letter as a circular type of letter in its present form which was directed to all the churches in the areas mentioned in northern Asia minor.
3. **The recipient of Peter's letter (also like Paul's letter to the Galatians) were probably a mixed group of JEWISH and GENTILE believers who were scattered throughout the five Roman provinces of ASIA MINOR in what is present day Turkey** – This is a circular (or general) letter, but unlike the others, it identifies its recipients. The letter is addressed to those who are from places in northern Asia Minor or modern Turkey (1:1): Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia.
4. **The letter was written around AD 64, either before or during the Neronian persecution, which helps to date the writing** – Tradition holds that both Paul and Peter were victims of persecution under Nero at Rome after the disastrous fire in the city of Rome on July 19 of AD 64. The death of Paul is considered to be before Peter's. The timing of Paul's death does not really affect the date of 1 Peter. The letter was written from "Babylon" (1 Peter 5:13) which was probably a cryptic title for Rome... the head of the then pagan, anti-God world (see Rev. 14:8, 17:5&18).
5. **The purpose of 1 Peter is to encourage and enable Christians/believer to face PERSECUTION and SUFFERING with hope in the grace of God** - Although 1 Peter does bare the form of a letter, the tone is that of a homiletical, teaching, instructional sermon designed to provide direction for believers under persecution; at times it also includes theological considerations which support the ethical exhortations, and to exhort his readers under persecution to follow the example of Christ whose life was characterized by patient suffering

Now with those brief reminder of the background to Peter's great letter, let look at Peter's word in the first chapter of his letter... pay close attention to verses 13-21, that is where we will be focusing our attention in this study.

In the first section of this chapter, Peter emphasized “walking in hope,” but now his emphasis is “walking in holiness.” The two go together. Listen to how John put it in 1 John 3:3, “*And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*”

Ground Work: How to be Full of Hopefull:

1. Walk in **HOPE** = 1 Peter 1:1-12
2. Walk in **HOLINESS** = 1 Peter 1:13-25

The root meaning of the word “holy” is “different.” A holy person is not an “odd person,” but a “different” person. His life has a quality about it that is different. His present “lifestyle” is not only different from his or her past life, but it is different from the “lifestyles” of the unbelievers around him. A Christian’s life of holiness appears strange to the lost. A little later in Peter’s letter, in 1 Peter 4:4, Peter says, “*In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.*” (READ: 1 Peter 4:1-4). So, a Christian’s life of holiness may appear strange to the lost, but it is not strange to other believers.

However, it is not easy to live in this world and maintain a holy walk. The anti-God atmosphere around us that the Bible calls “the world” is always pressing against us, trying to force us to conform (READ: Romans 12:1-2). In this paragraph, in 1 Peter 1:13-21, Peter presented to his readers and to us as present day believers five spiritual incentives to encourage them (and us) to maintain a different lifestyle, a holy walk in a polluted world.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you hear the phrase “holy person” what comes to mind?
2. Read 1 Peter 1:13-12 for a biblical description of a holy person. What are some of the things a holy person is and does? How do these make him or her different from most people?
3. What incentives did Peter give for living a holy life?
4. Which of these incentives, if any, is motivating for you? Why?
5. How can we “gird up the loins of our minds?”
6. Peter speaks of judgment in vs. 17. How does this talk of God judging your work affect you?
7. Why is it important to remember our salvation experience and what it cost God?
8. What practical steps can you/we take this week to become more holy?

5 SPIRITUAL INCENTIVES FOR BELIEVERS TO STAY CLEAN IN A POLLUTED WORLD

1. **The Glory of God (1 Peter 1:13)** – “¹³ *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;*” “The revelation of Jesus Christ” is another expression for the “living hope” and “the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Christian live in the future tense; their present actions and decisions are governed by this future hope. Just as an engaged couple makes all their plans in the light of that future wedding, so Christians today live with the expectation of seeing Jesus

Christ. Our focus is different. We are focused on something different than what the world and those of the world are focused on.

3 Helps in Focusing Your Mind in the Right Direction as a Believer:

(1) **Have a disciplined mind** – The phrase “*gird up the loins of your mind*” simply means, “pulling your thoughts together or having a disciplined mind.” The image is that of a robed man, tucking his skirt under the belt, so he can be free to run. When you center your thoughts on the return of Christ, your heavenly home and inheritance that awaits you (this is not the end, the best is yet to come) and live accordingly, you can escape the many worldly things that would encumber your mind and hinder your spiritual progress.

How does centering your thoughts... focusing our attention/mind on the return of Christ, on Heaven and our inheritance (what is ahead for us as believer) help us escape the things that we sometimes get caught up in in this world that may encumber and hinder our spiritual progress? What “things” (worldly things) do you think we are talking about?

Peter may have borrowed the idea from the Passover supper, because later in this section he identified Christ as the Lamb (1 Peter 1:19). The Jews at Passover were supposed to eat the meal in haste, ready to move (Exodus 12:11).

Think about it like this... what things are on the peripheral (margins, fringe, bordering, the hems) of your life? Those things that are on the fringes, the edges, the margins of our life are often the distractions that keep us from growing and being who God has called us to be. They become distractions and cause our focus to be drawn away, and often we get things very out of perspective and out of right priority. Ex. When our hobbies, entertainment, pastimes, sporting events, outings, etc. keep us from the things of God we have allowed the peripherals to take to important of a place in our lives.

Outlook determines outcome; attitude determines action. A Christian who is looking for the glory of God has a greater motivation for present obedience than a Christian who ignores the Lord’s return. **Why? How?** The contrast is illustrated in the lives of Abraham and Lot:

READ: Genesis 12:1-9; 13:1-18, Hebrews 11:8-16 – Abraham had his eyes of faith on the heavenly city, so he had no interest in the world’s real estate. But Lot, who had tasted the pleasures of the world in Egypt, gradually moved toward Sodom. Abraham brought blessing to his home, but Lot brought judgement. Outlook determines outcome.

(2) **Have a sober mind** – Not only should we, as believers, have a disciplined mind, but we should also have a “sober” mind. Peter says in verse 13, “*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;*” The words “be sober” in verse 13 mean literally, “be calm, steady, controlled; to weigh matters.” Unfortunately some people get “carried away” with prophetic studies, or deep theological debates, controversies and word semantics, weighty matters and lose their spiritual balance.

Some important facts that serve as reminders and motivators for Christians to be sober minded:

- **The fact that Christ is coming should encourage us to be calm and collected** - Peter says it in 1 Peter 4:7, *“⁷ But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.”* How does the fact of Christ’s coming help us to be calm and collected? We know that this is not all there is... that the best is yet to come and that any obstacles, struggles, suffering (persecution) we endure now is only temporary and good things are ahead where there will be no more suffering, struggle or pain. His coming give us hope, therefore, we can be “sober”... calm, steady, controlled **even when in our minds we may be being harassed, threatened, wronged, mistreated by the city*
- **The fact that Satan is on the prowl is another reason to be sober-minded** – In 1 Peter 5:8 it is Peter who warns us, *“⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* It is as if Peter is warning us of the enemies attacks ahead of time, so that we may as believers remain calm, cool and collected when it happens. But isn’t it usually just the opposite... we let our mind run wild with worry, fear and doubt. We may become defensive and retaliatory. We may just to conclusions, express anger bitterness or resentment. It shouldn’t surprise us that we would be attacked by the enemy in this life. Scripture warns us. Peter also said in 1 Peter 4:12, *“¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.”* And remember Jesus’ warning to us concerning Satan in John 10:10, *“¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”* So we need to be “sober minded” (calm, steady, controlled; to weigh matters), knowing that Satan is going to attack, but Jesus is with us and is better than, bigger than, able to handle it... and even promises to.

(3) **Have an optimistic mind** – We should also have an “optimistic mind.” Here is verse 13 again, *“¹³ 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;”* He says “rest your hope fully” or “home to the end.” In other words... “Have a hopeful outlook!”

★ **Dr. Warren Wiersbe** says *“When the outlook is gloomy, try the uplook!”* Good advice, indeed! Think of this... it has be dark for the stars to appear.

The result this spiritual mind-set is that a believer experiences the grace of God in his life. To be sure, we will experience grace when we see Jesus Christ; but we can also experience grace today as we look for Him to return. We have been saved by grace and we depend moment by moment on God’s grace... look back up at verse 10, *“¹⁰ Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you”* Looking for Christ to return strengthens our faith and hope in difficult days, and this imparts to us more of the grace of God. **Titus 2:11-13** is another passage that show the relationship between grace and the coming of Jesus Christ, *“¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

2. **The Holiness of ‘God (1 Peter 1:14-15)** – *“¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.”* The argument here is logical and simple. Children inherit the nature of their parents. God is holy; therefore, as His children, we should live holy lives. We are “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) and ought to reveal that nature in godly living. As Dr. John MacArthur puts it, *“Holiness essentially defines the Christian’s new nature and conduct in contrast with his pre-salvation lifestyle.”*

Peter reminded his readers of what they were before they trusted Christ with the words *“... not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance...”*

What we were before we trusted Christ:

- (1) **We were dead in trespasses** – Here is Paul in Ephesians 2:1-3, *“¹And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the ^{1a}course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”* What does it mean to be “dead”... especially dead in “trespasses and sins?” Much like what Peter is saying in verse 15, “dead” here means “dead to spiritual things.” Paul’s words here is a sobering reminder of the total sinfulness and lostness from which believers have been redeemed. “In” ... “dead in trespasses”... indicates the realm or sphere in which unregenerate sinners exist. They are not “dead” because of sinful acts that have been committed but because of their sinful nature. Jesus said it like this in Matthew 12:35, *“³⁵A good man out of the good treasure ¹of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.”* And in Matthew 15:18-19, *“¹⁸But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”* What do you think Jesus was telling us? I think it goes along with something I say quite often, that I believe is Biblically true, scripturally accurate... “Lost people are doing the only thing lost people know to do!” We often get critical of the “lost” because they don’t act more like “saved” people, yet they “lost” don’t know how to “act” saved because they aren’t they are dead to spiritual life and to spiritual things.
- (2) **We were children of disobedient** – They had been “children of disobedience.” Again Paul writes in Ephesians 2:1-3, *“¹And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”* **Before we were saved we too were children of disobedience**, but now they were to be obedient children. True salvation always results in obedience. Paul says in Romans 5:1, *“⁵Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.”* And look back us at verse 2 of 1 Peter 1, Peter says in 1 Peter 1:2... he says we were, *“²elect according to the foreknowledge of God the*

Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”

- (3) **We were imitators of the world** – They had also been “imitators of the world,” “fashioning themselves” after the standards and pleasures of the world. Listen to Paul’s words in Romans 12:2... a familiar verse, ² *“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.”* Romans 12:2 translates the same word as “conformed to the world.” Listen to Paul’s words in Ephesians 4:17-24... this is so powerful... just listen, ¹⁷ *“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, ¹⁸ 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; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”* Did you see we aren’t to “walks as the rest of the Gentiles” (the lost) or be imitators of them. “Unsaved people tell us that they want to be “free and different,” yet they all imitate one another!
- (4) **We were characterized by ignorance** – Peter uses this word in verse 14 of our passage, ¹⁴ *“As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance.”* “Ignorance” here is not an indication of brain power, or IQ. It is not saying that unsaved people are dumb, unintelligent, or not smart. Rather it means “ignorance” in regard to “spiritual matters.” Did you notice Paul used this same word in the passage we just looked at in Ephesians 4:17-24, ¹⁷ *“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, ¹⁸ 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; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”* The cause of all this is “ignorance” Peter speaks of in our passage in verse 14 that leads to “indulgence.” Unsaved people lack spiritual intelligence, and this causes them to give themselves to all kinds of fleshly and worldly indulgences (see Acts 17:30; Ephesians 4:17ff). Since we were born with a fallen nature, it was natural for us to live sinful lives. Nature determines appetites and actions. A dog and a cat behave differently because they have different natures.

We would still be in that sad sinful plight were it not for the grace of God. He called us! Notice especially verse 15 of our passage (1 Peter 1:14-15), ¹⁴ *“as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.”* “One day, Jesus called to Peter and his friends

and said “Come, follow me... and I will make you fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). They responded by faith to His call, and this completely changed their lives. Perhaps this explains why Peter used the word “called” so often in this letter.

What are we “called” to as believers/Christians:

- (1) **We are called to be holy (1 Peter 1:15)** - ¹⁵ *but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.*
- (2) **We are called out of darkness and into the light (1 Peter 2:9)** - ⁹ *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*
- (3) **We are called to follow Christ’s example (1 Peter 2:21)** - ²¹ *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.*
- (4) **We are called to inherit a blessing in the midst of persecution and suffering (1 Peter 3:8-9)** - ⁸ *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*
- (5) **We are called to His eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10)** - Best of all, we are called to “his eternal glory” 1 Peter 5:10 says it, ¹⁰ *But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*

God called us before we called on Him for salvation. It is all wholly of grace.

But God’s gracious election of sinners to become saints always involves responsibility, and not just privilege. He has chosen us in Christ “that we should be holy and without blame before him” (Ephesians 1:4). God has called us to Himself, and He is holy; therefore, we should be holy. Peter quoted from the Old Testament law to back up his admonition (Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26).

God’s holiness is an essential part of His nature. “God is light, and in him is not darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Any holiness that we have in character and conduct must be derived from Him. Basically, to be “sanctified” means to be “set apart for God’s exclusive use and pleasure.” It involves separation from that which is unclean and complete devotion to God (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1). WE are to be holy “in all manner of conversation [behavior],” so that everything we do reflects the holiness of God.

To a dedicated believer, there is no such thing as “secular” and “sacred.” All of life is holy as we live to glorify God. Even such ordinary activities as eating and drinking can be done to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). If something cannot be done to the glory of God, then we can be sure it must be out of the will of God.

3. **The Word of God (1 Peter 1:16)** - ¹⁶ *because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”* “It is written” is a statement that carries great authority for the believer.

What the Word of God Does for us:

- (1) **The Word of God defeats Satan** – Our Lord used the Word of God to defeat Satan, and so may we. **READ: Matthew 4:1-11** reminds us of how Jesus, Himself, used God’s Word to defeat the enemy, “*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*”² *And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.*”³ *Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”*”⁴ *But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”*”⁵ *Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,*”⁶ *and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”*”⁷ *Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”*”⁸ *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.*”⁹ *And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”*”¹⁰ *Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”*”¹¹ *Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.”* **QUESTIONS:** [1] *What sort of state was Jesus in do you think physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally?* [2] *What does this perhaps tell us about the enemy and how he may attack us?* [3] *What did Jesus do (use) to defeat Satan?* [4] *Why do you think this may have been His weapon of choice?* [5] *What was the result and what does this tell us about our own struggles and battles with the enemy when he attacks us?* **READ: Ephesians 6:10-18,** “¹⁰ *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*”¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*”¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*”¹³ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*”¹⁴ *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*”¹⁵ *and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*”¹⁶ *above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*”¹⁷ *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;*”¹⁸ *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”*
- (2) **The Word of God is a light to guide us** – But the Word of God is not only a sword for battle, it is also a light to guide us in this dark world. AS the Psalmist says it in Psalm 119:105... by the way this is the very first verse I ever memorized, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*” Don’t discount the simplicity of that simple verse. It is a powerful verse for your life. **QUESTIONS:** [1] *What does a “lamp” do?* [2] *In what practical ways is God’s Word like a lamp for us (our lives)?* [3] *What is a “path” and what is it’s purpose?* [4] *What do you think Scripture/the psalmist means by “path”* [5] *Why do we need a “light” on our path?* Isn’t it good to know that we have some instruction and accurate instruction for this journey called life. Peter will later write in 2 Peter 1:19, “¹⁹ *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do*

well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” What do you think Peter is tell us about the Word of God and what do you think this might have meant to these persecuted and struggling believers he was writing to?

- (3) **The Word of God is food to strengthen and sustain us** – Here is what Jesus says again in the “Temptations of Christ” passage that we read just a minute ago in Matthew 4:4, *⁴But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”* In other words the Word of God is food that strengthens us and sustains us. The “Weeping Prophet,” Jeremiah would say about God’s Word, in **Jeremiah 15:16** (I love this verse... just meditate on this one for a minute), *“Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.”* Where is Jeremiah telling us... about the Word of God... about what it does for us? Don’t you think that at least he is telling us that God’s Word feed us, nourishes us, sustains us, grows us, strengthens us, makes us stronger, etc. just like food for the body physically has that effect on us! Here is Peter in **1 Peter 2:1-3**, *“¹Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ²as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”*
- (4) **The Word of God is water to wash us – Convicts!** Paul makes an interesting statement about the Word of God in **Ephesians 5:25-27**, *“²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”* You’ve probably read that passage in Ephesians 5 hundred of times, but have you ever paid attention to what it is telling us about the Word God. Verse 26, *“²⁶That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,”* He is talking about Christ’s love for the church... believers in Jesus Christ, who Christ died for/gave Himself for... that they might be sanctified and set apart for His purposes, cleansed how? What does God’s Word do for us? How do we know how to live set apart lives for His purpose and live clean/set apart lives? By his word, it is like water washing over us, changing us, cleansing our minds, washing our mind and hearts for his purposes.
- (5) **The Word of God has a sanctifying work in us** – You know I love John 17. I refer to it all the time as “The Lord’s Prayer.” It is Jesus prayer for us. It is what He is praying for us, believer/Christians, right now... every day, as Scripture tell us “He ever lives to make intercession for us” and that right now He is at the right hand of Father interceding for us/on our behalf. Well, what is He praying. John 17 tell is. Here it is in **John 17:9-19**, *“⁹I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. ¹⁰And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. ¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the*

world. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” The Word of God has a sanctifying ministry in the lives of dedicated believers (John 17:17). In what ways does the Word of God “sanctify” us?

- (6) **The Word of God give us direction and blessing** – , Those who delight in God’s Word, meditate on it, and seek to obey it will experience God’s direction and blessing in their lives. Listen to the Psalmist in Psalm 1:1-3, “*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.*” The word “law” is a reference to God’s Word (as are statutes, principles, etc. used by the Psalms). What is this passage telling us about the Word of God and what it does for us?
- (7) **The Word of God reveals the mind, heart and will of God** - The Word reveals God’s mind, so we should learn it... God’s heart, so we should love it... God’s will, so we should live it. Out whole being ... mind, will, and heart... should be controlled by the Word of God.

Peter, in 1 Peter 1:15-16, quoted from the book of Leviticus, “*Ye shall be holy; for I am holy*” (Leviticus 11:44). Does this mean that the Old Testament law is authoritative today for New Testament Christians? Keep in mind that the early Christians did not even have the New Testament. The only Word of God they possessed was the Old Testament, and God used the Word to direct and mature them. Believers today are not under the ceremonial laws given to Israel, however, even in these laws we see moral and spiritual principles revealed. Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the Epistles, so we must obey them. (The Sabbath commandment was given especially to Israel and does not apply to us today... see Romans 14:1-9). As we read and study the Old Testament, we will learn much about God’s character and working, and we will see truths pictured in types and symbols.

The first step in keeping clean in a filthy world is to ask, “What does the Bible say?” In the Scriptures, we will find precepts, principles, promises, and persons to guide us in today’s decisions. If we are really willing to obey God, He will show us His truth (John 7:17). While God’s methods of working may change form age to age, His character remains the same and His spiritual precepts never vary. We do not study the Bible just to get to know the Bible... just for simple Bible knowledge. We study the Bible that we might get to know God better. To many earnest Bible students are content with outlines and explanations, and do not really get to know God. It is good to know the Word of God, but this should help us better know the God of the Bible... the Word.

4. **The Judgement of God (1 Peter 1:17)** – “*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.*” What? What did he (Peter) just say? As God’s children, we need to be serious about sin and about holy living. Our heavenly Father is a holy (John 17:11) and righteous Father (John 17:25). He will not compromise with sin. He is merciful and

forgiving, but He is also a loving disciplinarian who cannot permit His children to enjoy sin. After all, it was sin that sent His Son... His only begotten Son, to the cross (on our behalf). If we call God "Father," then we should reflect His nature.

What is this "**judgment**" that Peter wrote about in verse 17?

Some Important Things Concerning the Judgement that Peter Mentions in 1 Peter 1:17:

- (1) **It is a judgement of a believer's works** - It is the judgment of a believer's works.
- (2) **It has nothing to do with salvation** - It has nothing to do with salvation, except that salvation ought to produce "good works" (Titus 1:16; 2:7, 12). When we trusted Christ, God forgave our sins and declared us righteous in His Son (Romans 5:1-10; 8:1-4; Colossians 2:13). Our sins have already been judged on the cross (1 Peter 2:24), and therefore they cannot and will not be held against us (Hebrews 10:10-18). Isn't that great good news?
- (3) **It is likely a reference to the "judgement seat of Christ"** - However, when the Lord returns, there will be a time of judgment called "the judgment seat of Christ" (see Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10). Each of us will give an account of his or her works, and each will receive the appropriate reward. This is a "family judgment," the Father dealing with His beloved children.
- (4) **The word Peter used for "judge" is significant** - The Greek words translated "judged" carries the meaning "to judge in order to find something good." God will search into the motives for our ministry; He will examine our hearts. But He assures us that His purpose is to glorify Himself in our lives and ministries, "and then shall every man have praise to God (1 Corinthians 4:5). What an encouragement!

God will give us many gifts and privileges as we grow in the Christian life, but He will never give us the privilege to disobey and sin. He never pampers His children or indulges them. He is no respecter of persons. He "shows not partiality and accepts no bribes" (Deuteronomy 10:17). "For God does not show favoritism" (Romans 2:11). Years of obedience cannot purchase an hour of disobedience. If one of His children disobeys, God must chasten (Hebrews 12:1-13). But when His child obeys and serves Him in love, He notes that and prepares the proper reward.

Peter reminded his readers that they were only "sojourners" on earth. Life was too short to waste in disobedience and sin (see 1 Peter 4:1-6). It was when Lot stopped being a sojourner and became a resident in Sodom that he lost his concentration and his testimony. Everything he lived for went up in smoke! Keep reminding yourself that you are a "stranger and pilgrim" in this world (1 Peter 1:1; 2:11).

In view of the fact that the Father lovingly disciplines His children today and will judge their works in the future, we ought to cultivate an attitude of godly fear. This is not cringing in fear and terror like a beat down pet before his or her master... but this is loving reverence of a child before his father. It is not fear of judgment (1 John 4:18), but a fear of disappointing Him or sinning against His love. It is "godly fear" (2 Corinthians 7:1), a sober reverence for the Father.

I sometimes feel that there is today an increase in carelessness, even flippancy, in which we talk about God or talk to God. Nearly a century ago, Bishop B.F. Westcott said, “Every year makes me tremble at the daring with which people speak spiritual things.” What do you think he meant by that? The godly bishop should hear what is said today! A worldly actress calls God “the Man upstairs.” A baseball pitcher calls Him “the great Yankee in the sky.” And Old Testament Jew so fear God that he would not even pronounce His holy name, yet we today speak of God with carelessness and irreverence. In our public praying, we sometimes get so familiar that other people wonder whether we are trying to express our requests or impress the listeners with our nearness to God! I remember in my last church we had a young person (college age girl) pray in church one day, and she address God this way, “Daddy...” And she later referred to God as “Papa.” I get the sentiment... and the idea of intimacy but seemed quite “flippant” and “irreverent” to me. Have we forgotten the “holiness” and the awesome nature of God?

5. **The Love of God (1 Peter 1:18-21)** – *“¹⁸ Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. ²⁰ He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was ^[c] manifest in these last times for you ²¹ 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.”* This is the highest motive for holy living. In this paragraph, Peter reminded his readers of their salvation experience, a reminder that all of us regularly need. This is one reason our Lord established the Lord’s Supper, so that regularly His people would remember that He died for them. Note the reminders that gave.

Reminders Peter Gives of Christ’s Love for Believers:

(1) **Peter reminded them of what they were** – He reminded them of what they were.

What “they”/“we” were before we were saved?:

- **In bondage as slaves** - To begin with, they were slaves who needed to be free. The word **“redeemed”** is, to us, a theological term, but it carried a special meaning to people in the first-century Roman Empire. There were probably sixty million (60 million) slaves in the Roman Empire in Peter’s day. Many slaves became Christians and fellowshiped in the local assemblies. A slave could purchase his or her own freedom if he could collect sufficient funds; or his master could sell him to someone who would pay the price and set him free. Redemption was a precious thing in that day. We must never forget the slavery of sin (Titus 3:3). Moses urged Israel to remember that they were slaves in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:15; 16:12; 24:18,22). The generation that died in the wilderness forgot the bondage of Egypt and wanted to go back!
- **Empty and aimless** - Not only did we have a life of slavery, but we also had a life of emptiness. Peter called it **“... your aimless (empty) conduct received by tradition from your fathers.”** The NIV says it like this, **“... the empty way of life handed down to our from your forefathers.”** And he described it more specifically in 1 Peter 4:1-4, **“Therefore, since Christ suffered ^[a] for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² that he no**

longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. ³ *For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.* ⁴ *In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.”* At the time, these people thought their lives were “full” and “happy,” when they were really empty and miserable. Unsaved people today are blindly living on substitutes.

(2) Peter reminded them of what Christ did – Peter not only reminded them of what they were, but he also reminded them of what Christ did. He shed His precious blood to purchase us out of the slavery of sin and set us free forever. To redeem means “to set free by paying a price.” A slave could be freed with the payment of money, but no amount of money can set a lost sinner free. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can redeem us. Peter was a witness of Christ’s suffering (1 Peter 5:1) and mentioned His sacrificial death often in this letter (1 Peter 2:21ff; 3:18; 4:1,13; 5:1). In calling Christ “a lamb,” Peter was reminding his readers of an Old Testament teaching that was important in the early church, and that ought to be important to us today. It is the doctrine of “substitution;” and innocent victim giving his life for the guilty. The doctrine of sacrifice begins in Genesis 3, when God killed animals that He might clothe Adam and Eve. A ram died for Isaac (Genesis 22:13), and the Passover lamb was slain for each Jewish household (Exodus 12). Messiah was presented as an innocent Lamb in Isaiah 53. Isaac asked the question, “Where is the lamb? (Genesis 22:7), and John the Baptist answered it when he pointed to Jesus and said in John 1:29, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” In heaven, the redeemed and the angels sing, “Worthy is the Lamb” (Revelation 5:11-14).

Peter made it abundantly clear that Christ’s death was an appointment, not an accident; for it was ordained by God before the foundation of the world (Acts 2:23). From the human perspective, our Lord was cruelly murdered; but from the divine perspective, He laid down His life for sinners... like me and like you (John 10:17-18). But He was raised from the dead! Now, anyone who trusts Him will be saved for eternity.

CONCLUSION

When you and I meditate on the sacrifice of Christ for us, certainly we should want to obey God and live holy lives for His glory. When only a young lady, Frances Ridley Havergal say a picture of the crucified Christ with this caption under it: “I did this for thee. What hast thou done for Me?” Quickly, she wrote a poem, but was dissatisfied with it and threw it into the fireplace. The paper came out unharmed? Later, at her father’s suggestion, she published the poem, and today we sing it... it’s in our hymn books, #606, “I Gave My Life for Thee” **one of my favorites.*

I gave My life for thee, My precious blood I shed;
That thou might ransomed be, and quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave, My life for thee, what hast thou given for Me?

A good question, indeed! I trust we can give a good answer to the Lord.

Discussion Questions:

9. When you hear the phrase “holy person” what comes to mind?
10. Read 1 Peter 1:13-12 for a biblical description of a holy person. What are some of the things a holy person is and does? How do these make him or her different from most people?
11. What incentives did Peter give for living a holy life?
12. Which of these incentives, if any, is motivating for you? Why?
13. How can we “gird up the loins of our minds?”
14. Peter speaks of judgment in vs. 17. How does this talk of God judging your work affect you?
15. Why is it important to remember our salvation experience and what it cost God?
16. What practical steps can you/we take this week to become more holy?

★ Leonard Ravenhill has written (source unknown), “The greatest miracle that God can do today is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world, and make that man holy and put him back into that unholy world and keep him holy in it.” He does it as we focus on Christ’s coming, as we’re obedient in all of life, and as we grow in our personal knowledge of God’s holiness.