

“Hope that Leads to Holiness” (Part 1)

1 Peter 1:13-21

Take your Bible and open it up with me to the book of 1 Peter, chapter 1. If you are a guest with us this morning, I have been working my way through the book of 1 Peter since the first Sunday in January. We have been in a teaching series that we have entitled, “Hope Beyond Hurt.” The living hope that Christians have in Christ is the theme of what Peter writes to some scattered believers who were being persecuted for their faith.

In the first several verses of chapter one, Peter describes the ‘greatness’ of our salvation and the hope it brings to our lives, even in the midst of hurts and struggles. Verse 13 marks a transition in the chapter as Peter shifts from the doctrinal to the practical, from statement to application.

Notice he uses the word, “Therefore.” Denotes a shift!

For the past 12 verses, Peter has sought to encourage his readers by rooting them in the salvation that was planned by God the Father, carried out by God the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit to their individual lives. He has explained that they live in an exciting time of prophetic fulfillment and that they are the privileged recipients of spiritual realities that the prophets wrote about, even things that angels long to look into. The next question, then, that inevitably arises is this —“What am I supposed to do?”

He is going to begin showing the practical importance that our hope has in our lives as Christians. What we believe about salvation has bearing upon the way that we live and behave as Christians. Peter says that our hope leads us to the pursuit of personal holiness.

If the issue that Peter addresses in the first part of chapter one deals with our joy in the midst of struggle, then the issue addressed in this next section deals with our integrity in the midst of a corrupt culture. He answers the question, “How can I stay clean in such a corrupted world?” How can I live as a committed follower of Jesus Christ when the world around me seems to be ever so dark? These are the questions that you and I are grappling with right now.

Chuck Swindoll has offered a remarkable insight:

“Throughout history, Christians have responded to this question with all sorts of extremes. Some have adopted a hermit mentality, hiding away in caves and living a life of virtual solitude. Others have modeled a monk mentality, dwelling only with believers in a close-knit community away from the world’s reach. Those with a utopian mentality have attempted to rebuild a perfect society from the ground up—a world without worldliness. Interestingly, each approach falls under the idea of a sanctification by isolation—withdrawing from the world in some way to keep it from rubbing off on them. The Bible provides a very different approach from that of the hermits, monks, and utopians. Believers have a mission to accomplish in the world, and therefore we can’t afford to lock ourselves outside the world. The Christian’s solution to the problem of holy living in an unholy world is not isolation, it’s insulation.”

Isolation is withdrawal from the outside world, insulation is protection on the inside that holds up under adversity.

It is this ‘insulation’ from the world that Peter describes in this passage. He says that the answer is pursuing holiness in view of the hope that we have in Christ. According to what he writes, hope that leads to holiness involves at least three

things: a life that is consecrated in hope, a heart that is conditioned by fear, and a mind that is consumed with glory.

1. A life that is CONSECRATED in hope (1:13)

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Peter says that in light of all that’s true of our lives as those who have come to inherit the salvation blessing that he has gone through great lengths to describe, here is how we are to now live. Because God has caused us to be born again to a living hope, we are to ‘fix’ our hope on God. It is an indicative-imperative pattern. Another way of saying it is that the indicative (what God has done for us in Christ) is always the basis for the imperative (how we should now live our lives). To confuse the order here would be totally disastrous. The result would be a type of works-based righteousness rather than seeing holiness as the result of God’s grace. Our obedience to God as believers is always a loving response to what He has done in our lives.

I have been made holy in Christ, therefore I am to pursue holiness in Christ. Because I have a hope that relies on God, I must now set my hope fully on God. Peter tells us that a consecrated life is not something that happens by accident. Rather, holiness demands that you and I be proactive in our faith. Peter says that it demands:

Intentionality in our thinking

13a— Therefore, preparing your minds for action...

Personal holiness is a matter of the heart and mind. It should not be confused with morality. Morality is outward conformance to a set of standards—the cleanness of one’s conduct alone. Holiness is an inward transformation—the cleanness of one’s soul that manifests itself in obedient living. (illus. of Pharisees)

In other words, it is not something that begins on the outside through behavior modification; it is something that begins on the inside through gospel transformation.

In the first eleven chapters of the book of the Romans, the apostle Paul writes about salvation, and in chapter 12 there is a shift to the practical implications of the change that the gospel brings in our lives:

Romans 12:1-2—“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Change begins on the inside. It is the work of the Spirit of God and the implanted Word of God. And yet there is to be an intentional effort on my part regarding my sanctification.

“Preparing” —*literally means to ‘gird up’ and refers to the tightening of a belt, cinching up a cord, or tying something down in preparation for some action*

Growing up, my dad was the king of bungee cords. Do you know what I’m taking about? If we took our trash to the landfill, dad would somehow tie it all down in the truck with a bungee cord. Or, if we were picking something up from Lowe’s,

dad would bring out the bungee cords. I mean he had it all down to a science. One time I remember he even used a bungee cord to strap me down to the back of his motorcycle so that if I fell asleep I wouldn't fall off.

That is the idea that Peter is getting at here. He is saying, "Bungee cord your mind, tie it down, and don't let it fly all over the place."

It is the idea of getting all the loose corners in place.

He is using this image as a metaphor and applies it to the believer's mind. He urges us to pull in all the loose ends of our lives by being disciplined in our thinking. Paul uses this same expression when describing the armor of God:

Ephesians 6:14—“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth...”

John MacArthur — *“The first thing a Roman soldier did prior to heading into battle was put on his belt and tie up his robe so that its loose ends would not hinder his combat effectiveness. When he girded up his robe, it indicated the soldier was serious about preparing for the life and death of hand-to-hand combat.”*

The idea is that you and I are to take that same approach as the disciples of Jesus. We are to 'prepare' ourselves for action. Disciplined thoughts leading to purposeful actions.

Schreiner writes that our “hope will not become a reality without disciplined thinking.” And thinking in a totally new way does not just happen automatically. It requires effort, concentration, and intentionality on our part. We take captive every thought and bring it under submission and obedience to Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).

Why is this so important?

Proverbs 23:7—“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

Perhaps you have heard it put this way—“What is down in the well is what comes up in the bucket!” The mind/heart is the source of all our issues.

My life is no better than the sum of all my thoughts. Show me someone whose life has gone off the rails, and I’ll show you someone whose thoughts went astray long before.

Stephen Covey—*“Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.”*

The psalmist had a lot to say about our thought life:

Psalm 10:4—“The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.”

Psalm 139:1-2—“You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.”

Psalm 139:17—“How precious to me are your thoughts O God! How vast is the sum of them!”

Psalm 146:3-5—“Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his thoughts perish. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God.”

A.W. Tozer—*“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”*

The secret to a life of contentment is good theology. Not possessions. Not more stuff. It involves a changed mind, one that is gripped by the greatness of God and the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things.

The secret to a happy home and marriage is good theology leading to obedience. The reason that many Christian couples are frustrated in their marriage is that they've have taken their marriage cues from the culture. You have filled your mind with ideas that simply aren't true.

The way to thrive in a corrupt society is good theology. A mind and heart saturated in the truth of God, committed to the worship of God, and all for the glory of God.

Peter says that a life consecrated in hope demands there be intentionality in our thought life. Then notice also:

Responsibility in our actions

13b— Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded...

Peter says that the Christian life involves action. We have not been saved to sit on the sidelines. God has work for each one of us to do. Grace must not lead to a passive life. Rather, a true experience of grace will fire up your heart for obedience and result in a glad surrender to serve.

Again, Peter's instructions here involve our active, willing participation. It is not that we gird up the loins of our minds for no reason. We discipline ourselves for devotion.

Notice again the emphasis that is placed on our minds.

“Sober-minded” — *can be translated as ‘sober in spirit’ and means that we are not to become intoxicated by the world*

When a person is ‘intoxicated’ by some foreign substance, they are said to be under the influence or control of it. To be intoxicated means that you have lost all control of your thoughts and actions.

People do stupid stuff when they are drunk or high.

Just as a person loses all control by becoming intoxicated by alcohol or some drug, so also can we become ‘drunk’ by imbibing the world’s sinful system.

Who or what is controlling your mind? The enemy wages his war for the mind. By distracting our minds with all sorts of stuff that he throws at us, Satan knows that he can render us defeated, frustrated, and ineffective in the mission that God has for us as a church.

What must we do? Listen—Peter says that we must take responsibility for our thinking and our actions.

Ephesians 5:18-21 — “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

He says something similar to the Colossian church:

Colossians 3:16-17 — “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever

you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Rather than being intoxicated with the world and its system, you and I are to be filled with both the Spirit and the Word of Christ. Perhaps failure to do what Peter says here is the leading cause of deadness throughout much of the confessing church.

It is hard to worship with devotion and with a mind that is captivated by the beauty of Jesus Christ when you have fried it all week long with nothing but cable news, social media, sensual music lyrics, or the latest fashion trends from the Kardashian clan. (Although I'm not even sure what made them a 'thing' in pop culture?)

What we put into our minds will come out in our actions. We act upon what we think is most important.

1 John 2:15-17—“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

In other words, don't be preoccupied with this present 'world system' and its allurements.

Kenneth Wuest—*“The world of unsaved humanity is inspired by the ‘spirit of the age’...which is defined as follows: All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time...being the*

atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.”

Instead of breathing in and becoming intoxicated with the corrupted thinking of this fallen world, Peter says that we as Christians must be sober-minded.

Our God has left us in this world, not to let it press us into its mold, but to influence the world for Christ's sake.

Totality in our devotion

13c—“set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

With minds that are made up, and wills that are resolved to obey, Peter now calls on believers to place the full weight of their hope and confidence on the grace of God in Christ. This is important because when life often gets tough, we look for something or someone to place our hope in.

The command is for us to ‘fix’ our hope upon that which really matters. The word is an aorist active imperative by which Peter calls us to decisive action. To ‘fix’ our hope is an obligatory act of the will rather than an emotional feeling. I am do this fully.

The word he uses speaks of ‘completeness.’ I must totally place all of my hope in Christ. Surrender every area of your life to Him. Don't place some of your hope in Jesus and some of your hope in yourself. No, trust fully and totally in Him. Fully rely on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

All that we have been given in Jesus Christ is by the grace of God. You will notice that Peter refers to future grace that is ours. The grammatical structure of

this last statement is one that indicates absolute assurance of a future event by referring to it as if it were already happening.

“Revelation” — *the ‘unveiling’ of Jesus Christ*

Titus 2:11-14—“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”

We are to live our lives in the present in view of the hope that we have for the future. To live as God’s people in the midst of a corrupt culture, we must set our hope fully on Christ and His promised salvation. And in order for us to do that, we have got to be disciplined in our thought life and sober in our thinking, not intoxicated with the world’s priorities.

In other words, don’t misplace your hope! To do so is to compound unnecessary misery and sorrow in your life.

One of the most decisive and influential military victories in history was the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English navy in 1588. At the time, the world was under the impression that the Spanish were an invincible force. They had the numbers on their side. They had the pope on their side, who gave his blessing to what was called “The Enterprise of England,” which he hoped would bring the Protestant isle back into the fold of Rome.

And so on May 19, 1588, the massive Armada set sail on a mission to secure control of the English channel and conquer England for the Spanish crown. It consisted of 130 ships loaded down with 2,500 guns and nearly 30,000 soldiers. Due to their size, the Spanish ships were slower than their English counterparts. So their battle plan was overcome the English by sheer numbers, whom they were sure would engage in open combat. They hoped that the English navy would come out to meet them in open waters.

On July 21, the English navy began bombarding the seven mile long line of Spanish ships from a safe distance, taking full advantage of a newly developed long range artillery.

It was like a kid standing up to a bully on the playground saying, “You may be bigger and stronger than me, but I’m faster, and from a safe distance, I’m accurate with a rock!”

For the next several days, the English navy began thinning out the Spanish Armada one by one. On July 27, the Spanish anchored in exposed position off the coast of France. Without control of the English Channel like they had hoped, their passage into England became impossible.

Just after midnight on July 29, the English sent eight burning ships into the crowded harbor where the Spanish fleet had anchored. Panic ensued, and the Spanish were forced to cut their anchors and flee out to sea, completely out of formation. At dawn, the English began to rain down heavy artillery, and the devastated Armada was forced to retreat in humiliation back to Spain.

The point is this—Your hope is no better than the object you place it in. Misplaced hope is a serious miscalculation, and it is one that some of you are making right now.

David wrote about this in Psalm 39. He spoke of the need to place all of our hope in God rather than the stuff that we try to accumulate for ourselves.

Psalm 39:4—“O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am!

Psalm 39:5—“Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is nothing before you. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath!”

Psalm 39:6—“Surely a man goes about as a shadow! Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!”

Psalm 39:7—“And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.”

When we plant our hopes in the fleeting things of this world, the Lord will allow us to experience the bitter disappointment of misplaced hope. Some of us are there.

He loves you way too much to allow you to follow the natural inclinations of your heart, trying to find your hope in a job, in some relationship, in your family, or in material things. His reason is so that we will find our ultimate hope and satisfaction in Him. And if peace and joy in life is something you long for, then know that it will not be found outside of a mind that is made up in Christ.

Application for the church:

- Don't drift through life without a sense of purpose; God has saved you for infinitely more than you can imagine

- Understand you are no better than the sum of your thoughts; think & live with gospel-focused intentionality
- Realize that your future is brighter and better than your past or present; Christ is coming for His bride; live this day in light of that day!

If you are not yet a Christian, the application for you is to receive Jesus as your Savior now. Place your faith and trust in Him alone. Allow Him to begin changing you from the inside out. He will cleanse and forgive you of your sin and will give you the hope you need for life.