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14* As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours in your ignorance*, 15* but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; 16* because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

In our text this morning Peter is beginning to give the practical applications of the doctrinal refresher he has presented them with in the previous verses.

Because they were aliens in the lands and were about to suffer persecution, they were reminded that they were known and loved by God in a unique way and they were set apart for obedience to Christ by the washing of His blood. They possessed a certain and absolute hope in the living Christ, who was raised from the dead and they would experience all of what God had reserved for them in the day of the completion of their salvation at the appearing of Christ. And so it is for all believers through the ages to follow.

Therefore, with all of these glorious truths, these gracious doctrines to strengthen and encourage us in and through every condition and circumstance of life, Peter writes:

13* ¶ Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He is saying that it is time to live with these great truths in their minds no matter what comes their way. He is saying that a Christ entranced view of the world in which God has placed them to be obedient servants unto Christ is the only way for a true disciple of Christ to live their lives. These doctrines are so fundamental to the life of a believer that they represent all of the hope and stability that we have in Christ our Savior. We are placed in Him and He has placed His life in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit, therefore, prepare your minds for action.

How is the mind prepared for action with a Christ centered view and then purpose? For them it begins with reminding themselves of the great doctrinal truths that they have been taught. Remember, they could not pick up a bible and read and study and meditate on the written word with the ease and comfort that we can.

They at times and depending on whether or not Jews in certain places were a bit more tolerant of them, might have access to the synagogue and hear the truths of Scripture read. They would have whatever copies of the Apostles letters that were being circulated and the in person teaching of the Apostles and the elders of the local assemblies and up to a particular time in history the traveling prophets and evangelists. They would have these truths in these limited ways and with this limited access to the Scriptures, from our vantage point, Peter says they are to prepare their minds for action.

This can only mean that they were, as they were able, to renew their minds with the Word of God so that they would be in the continual process of being transformed more into the likeness of Christ as Paul wrote:

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1, 2, NAS95).

Preparing the mind for action is establishing our purpose for living in a way that glorifies God in our daily living, which is being a sacrifice, which is worship of Christ as spiritual beings. Peter is using some Old covenant imagery here to bring us New covenant teaching.

Under the old covenant, all sacrifice was engaging in an act of worship, even if the heart was not changed by God. Even the mere external Covenant obedience to offer some grain to God because of some sin was worship in that context.

But now we worship in spirit and in truth. All of our living is to be a sacrifice and therefore it is our worship. Worship is our living, not just gathering in some formal meeting and having an organized agenda of singing and preaching.

Paul uses a variation of the same word in Ephesians 6:14

Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED (prepared) YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS quoting from Is.11:5

Girded is used in the KJV for both verses. The modern rendering is prepare.

The allusion here is to the manner in which the Orientals were accustomed to dress. They wear loose, flowing robes, so that, when they wished to run, or to fight, or to apply themselves to any business, they are obliged to bind their garments close

around them. The meaning here is, that they were to have their minds in constant preparation to discharge the duties, or to endure the trials of life--like those who were prepared for labour, for a race, or for a conflict.

And how clear that would be to them and should be to us. For the Christian life is really all three: labor, a race and conflict. The harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few, we run a race with Christ as our goal and prize and we are opposed in many ways by the world, the flesh and the Devil.

¶ **Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

We are to keep sober in spirit. Sober is to not only be serious but the metaphor here is as opposed to being drunk. In other words we are to be unaffected by that which would impair our spirit. When a person is drunk, they are not in control of their faculties. They are easily deceived and swayed to do all manner of things. Judgement is impaired and the consequences can be devastating.

We could also describe it as being of a sound mind; one who follows sound reason, and who is not under the control of passion. The idea is, that we should have our desires and passions well regulated. Perhaps the word prudent would come nearer to the meaning of the apostle than any single word which we have.

Prudence is care, caution, and good judgment, as well as wisdom in looking ahead. It is always being prepared for the right choices based on what we see before us as our transformation continues to progress in the righteousness of Christ.

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So we are to prepare our minds for action and keep sober in spirit because of all the wonderful elements of the grace of God in our lives through Jesus Christ. Therefore as we are living in Christ because of grace we are to have our hope fixed completely on that grace as it will be made final and complete in every aspect when we are with Christ at the consummation of His kingdom.

We are to persevere in hope until the end no matter what comes our way.

It means, that they were not to become faint or weary in their trials. They were not to abandon the hopes of the grace which is the good news, the gospel truth of

Christ our Lord. They were to cherish those hopes to the end of life, whatever opposition they might meet with, and however much might be done by others to induce them to turn from Christ.

And this has not changed. Each of us is or has been under pressure from many enemies of the gospel in one way or another to be tempted to walk away from what some would call the foolishness of the bible and its truth, to forget about Jesus, someone you have never seen so how can you really love him and believe in the nonsense of Him being the son of God. How great is the heritage of all true believers in every age that we share in the same battle for our hearts, for our minds, for our very souls but praise be to God that we are secure in Him and His very elect cannot and will not ever turn from Him because we are kept by the power of God.

Our life in Christ begins in grace and because of grace and will have its completion in grace and because of grace.

How sad it is that so many Christians who quote “for you have been saved by grace” understand so little about what grace really is. The idea that God by a sovereign act of His will rather than a precipitated act of our will, saves us from our sin is hateful to many Christians and this exposes the lack of biblical understanding, not a lack of salvation, that many have concerning grace. For many, grace has been oversimplified to a dictionary meaning of unmerited favor and grace is certainly that, but it is so much more. What this reveals to me is that many Christians really do not understand how utterly detestable sin is when compared to the holiness of God and the righteousness of Christ our Lord. They really do not understand the depth of what it means to have been dead in our trespasses and sins and then brought to newness of life in Christ. And this is reflected in the very loose attitudes and standards that we have about supposedly being saved and how we talk about God and how we worship our Savior.

Peter has instructed believers to persevere in the grace that God has blessed us with and if we do not understand the riches and the depth of grace that God has granted us we will struggle all the more through the difficult times when they come. O yes, God will have us secure in Him and the Holy Spirit will be our comforter but we will

be stressed of mind and body all the more when we do not understand that our God is a sovereign God and does whatever He pleases even when it concerns us. He does all things for His purpose, His pleasure and for the praise of His glorious grace. His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are beyond our thoughts and yet there is so much of His will that He has revealed to us and these things are revealed in the doctrines of grace that Peter reminded these Christians of and that we need to be reminded of so that we will know that we can persevere because of the grace of God in all of its ways that God applies to our lives as aliens in a foreign land.

fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

When all things come to their completion at the revelation of Christ, at His coming, at the time of the glorious consummation of His kingdom it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Loving Him not having seen Him - loving Him seeing Him for the rest of eternity.

What more can we really hope for? Everything else in life is temporary. Every good thing, every hurtful thing, even our memories, good or bad will be gone because everything will be Christ in eternity. Who will want to remember anything of this life no matter how good it seemed, if it was still tainted to some degree by sin? Every good work is tainted by sin because we are still sinful men. Nothing we do is perfect because it is tainted by sin. But we are to progress, we are to hunger and thirst after righteousness and to be Holy even as Christ is holy, we are to strive for that which Christ has made us, even if we are imperfect in this world. Why? Because in Him we are these things already and perfect and one day we will experience the completed the perfected form of these things, untainted by sin because of Christ as we stand in resurrection glory with Him.

Knowing the greatness of grace we fix our minds, be sober in spirit and persevere in the things of grace because of the glory that awaits us. Therefore we are able to endure because the promises will be fulfilled and are progressively being fulfilled even if for a short while we know trial and tribulation.

14* As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours in your ignorance,*15* but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; 16* because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

As we progress in the things of grace, which are proven by the marks of holiness, we are doing so as obedient children. This is why unrestrained disobedience in those who claim to be Christians can only lead one to believe that they are not Christians at all. Continued disobedience without repentance only shows a lack of love for Christ, not a love for Christ. The things that we were once conformed to are to be replaced with the things of God. Jesus said, "If you love me keep my commands."

This is habitual, this is growing in the love of Christ, this is our joyful duty and desire. To obey Him is to love him.

Not conforming or fashioning ourselves (KJV). Not forming or modelling our life as we have already referred to rom.12:1-2. to the former self. The idea is, that they and we are to have some model or example, in accordance with which to frame our lives, but that we are not to make our own former principles and conduct the model. The Christian is to be as different from what he was himself before conversion as he is from his fellow-men. He is to be governed by new laws, to aim at new objects, and to mould his life in accordance with new principles. Before conversion, we were supremely selfish; lived for personal gratification; gave free indulgence to our appetites and passions, sometimes restrained only by a respect for what we thought were the decencies of life, and by a reference to our own health, property, or reputation, without regard to the will of God; we conformed ourselves to the customs and opinions around us, rather than to the requirements of Christ and we lived for worldly gain.

In many cases, those who are now Christians, gave indulgence to every passion which they wished to gratify, regardless of reputation, health, property, or salvation. Now they are to be governed by a different rule, and their own former standard of morals and of opinions is no longer their guide, but is instead seeking the will of God.

15* but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; 16* because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

It a guarantee that we will be holy like Christ at the time of His appearing in the resurrection. But we are to strive to show, not attain, more of that holiness in this life

as obedient children. Christ was holy in all of His behavior and we are to be holy in all of ours because we are Christ's. This does not mean legalistic living. All legalism is opposed to grace.

This is Peter quoting from Lev. 11:44. The command was given to the Israelites and unless they were true believers they could not obey it.

The foundation of the command is, that they professed to be his people, and that as his people they ought to be like their God. It is a great truth, that men everywhere will imitate the God whom they worship. They will form their character in accordance with his. They will regard what he does as right. They will attempt to rise no higher in virtue than the God whom they adore, and they will practice freely what he is supposed to do or approve. Hence, by knowing what are the characteristics of the gods which are worshipped by any people, we may form a correct estimate of the character of the people themselves; and hence, as the God who is the object of the Christian's worship is perfectly holy, the character of his worshippers *should* also be holy. As the worship of the heathen moulds the character of the worshippers into the image of their gods, so the worship of Christ moulds the character of his professed disciples into His image, and they become more like Him.

In the Sermon on the Mount, if you recall, Jesus quoted the same passage only He substituted the word perfect for holy in Mt. 5:48. Peter would have remembered this and again is following the pattern of Jesus teaching on the Mount.

Jesus ends this part of His sermon with the words, "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

What is this perfection? Is it an absolute?

It is the greek word teleios. It means coming to an end, mature, being complete. As Jesus has full authority to say "but I say unto you and make these demands upon his people He has the authority to tell us to be perfect like our heavenly Father. He has fulfilled all of the Law and the Prophets. His authority comes from the Father. He has addressed the fallacies, misunderstandings and misapplications of numerous teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees and tells those who will be His that He demands

a different kind of living.

God is not a hypocrite. If we are His children we cannot be hypocrites. God is transparent in all He does as He reveals Himself to us. We are to be the same to each other and the world. We are to be seen as growing in the completion that will be ours as we stand in glory with Jesus.

God is working to will and to do his good pleasure in us. And we are to work outwardly our salvation. This is not mere counsel, not just a precept, or that an absolute perfection in holiness is a thing in this life that is attainable. But it is our duty to labor for it, as Paul wrote which is an echo of Jesus words:

forgetting what is behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Philip. 3:13,14.

Jesus, Peter, Paul and the Old covenant scriptures have taught us the same thing. It is a universal truth for God's true people through the ages.

As we strive to be holy in this present life we are already completely holy in Christ. We are and will be holy.

Although our holiness in the daily living of our lives is not perfect, it is perfect in Christ and therefore it will be perfect because of Christ.

So how does the holiness of God come to expression in our lives?

Let me finish with five thoughts from John Piper:

- 1) The holy God calls us powerfully to himself
- 2) he gives us his Holy Spirit to bear witness that we are his children
- 3) he opens our eyes to overcome our ignorance about the suicidal nature of desires that wage war against the soul (2:11) and enables us to assess the supremacy of his worth, his holiness, properly
- 4) the upshot of new apprehensions of truth and value is a whole new field of desires: the former ones begin to die as foolish and suicidal; the new ones grow with increasing realization of the worth of God's holiness
- 5) And so in all our behavior the holiness of God becomes the dominating, all-shaping reality of life.