

LIVING BY HOPE

1 Peter 1:13-16

Intro: I feel sure that most of you have noticed that there is a difference between the writing of the Apostle Peter as compared with the writing of the Apostle Paul. As far as their teaching is concerned, they are in agreement in every detail. But I am referring to the arrangement of the material in their letters. In Ephesians, for example, the Apostle Paul really waited until he had gotten through the doctrinal part of that epistle before he began to concentrate on the practical application of his teaching. And this seems to be the pattern that he followed in most of his epistles. But before we have gotten through the first chapter of 1 Peter, we come to a very practical application of what the Apostle Peter had been saying up to this point. My text for today is 1 Peter, chapter 1, verses 13 through 16, and it is all practical. And then, before we get to the end of the chapter, we another practical exhortation in verse 22. (Read.) I would encourage you in reading this epistle to note how the Apostle Peter quickly moves in his teaching from the doctrinal to the practical, and then back to the doctrinal again. Both apostles agree that the doctrinal needs to be followed with practical applications, but they just go about it in different ways.

I have taken my subject, *Living By Hope*, from the statement in verse 13, “and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Now if they were to “hope to the end,” this is an exhortation to *live by hope*, that is, to make *hope* one of the outstanding characteristics of their lives.

The practical exhortation in verse 22 to which I referred a moment ago gives us another characteristics that was to be dominant in their lives, and that was *love*. The Apostle Paul told the Ephesians that they were to “walk in love” (Eph. 5:2). So love is to be very evident in our lives as Christians – love for God, love for Christ, love for each other, and even a loving concern for people who are without Christ.

Paul was describing all Christians when he said that “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). He meant by that statement that trusting God should always be an outstanding way to identify a child of God.

I could go on to speak of other things that are marks of a true Christians, but I think this will help you to see what I am thinking about. The Apostle Peter was teaching those early Christians that “hope” always needed to be a trait that others would be aware was a very important part of their daily living.

The way the Apostle Paul expressed it in his letter to Titus should help us to understand what Peter was speaking about here. I am referring to the way Paul began Titus 2:13. He said that we are to be “looking for that blessed hope” which he said would take place at “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Our “hope” is the fulfillment of the purpose that God has had in saving every one of us. It is the hope of being in heaven, but, even more than that, *it is the hope of being like the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Peter was preparing his readers for this emphasis when he called them, in the first verse of this epistle, “strangers.” This is what we all are in this world – “strangers.” In chapter 2, verse 11, Peter called those Christians to whom he was writing, “strangers and pilgrims.” You see, we are headed for heaven and glory, and we must not live in this world like we belonged here, and that we are going to be here forever. This world is not our permanent abiding place. The Lord is coming to take us to be where He is. Heaven is our home.

Someone reminded me the other day of the statement that used to be made of some Christians, that they were so heavenly minded that they were of no earthly good. I personally have never known anyone like that. Most of us are not heavenly minded enough. We are too attached to this world. Besides, the Bible teaches us that the most heavenly minded of God’s people are the ones who are doing the most good here on earth. We are not to put ourselves above other people because we know the Lord. That fact should make us the most humble people on the face of the earth. But the Lord leaves us here on earth that He might use us to make other people realize that there is an eternity ahead, and that we need to get ready for the day when either we die and go to be with the Lord, or the Lord will come to take us all to heaven. There is only one other alternative to heaven, and that is hell!

We speak of heaven and being with Christ as our hope, not because they are uncertain in our future, but because they are our certain future! They are guaranteed to all of us who know Christ as our Savior, guaranteed by God Himself.

Have you noticed that the Apostle Peter spoke of our hope *four times* in this epistle? First in verse 3 of chapter 1. (Read.) Next in our text for today – verse 13 of chapter 1. (Read.) And then you will find it a third time in verse 21 of chapter 1. (Read.) The fourth time is in chapter 3, verse 15. (Read.) And all of these verses speak of the same thing, that future certain prospect that some day we will be in heaven with the Lord, and like the Lord.

If anyone should need further clarification on this great truth, we can find it in the writing of the Apostle John: 1 John 3:1-3:

- 1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.
- 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.
- 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Please notice that the Apostle John said that if you really have this hope in Christ, the proof will be seen in your desire to be holy – and this is exactly the emphasis that the Apostle Peter was making in our text for today.

As we look at verse 13 in 1 Peter 1, please notice the first word:

I. “WHEREFORE” (1 Pet. 1:13a).

This is a word which connects what the Apostle Peter had been writing about, with what now would follow. This means, “For what reason? What was His purpose, in this case, God’s purpose? What objective did He have in mind?” Or we could translate it with a simple, “Why?”

To sum up all that the Apostle Peter had said up to this point, it was like here in verse 13 he was saying, “Why did God choose to save us? Why did Christ die and shed His blood on the Cross? Why have we been born again? Why are our trials here on earth a necessary part of what God is doing with us? And why did the OT prophets prophesy of the Gospel message?

And the answer is, *because God was preparing a people to be in heaven with Him some day!* It all begins, as far as we are concerned, when we are born again. But we need to know that this is only the beginning. It is a glorious beginning when the Lord makes us new creatures in Christ, but it is still only the beginning of what God has planned for us. All of us need to move on from there.

Now Peter was speaking of what we are to do *now* in preparation for that which is to come. It could have been the Lord’s plan to take each one of us to heaven the moment we are saved, but that is not what happens, at least, not usually. We are left here to live in this ungodly world, but we have certain prescribed responsibilities in our relationship to God. And first and foremost Peter described:

II. HOW WE ARE TO LIVE (1 Pet. 1:13b).

The life of Christians is described in various ways in the Bible, as I have pointed out to you already, but that which we read here is that we are to “hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you [us] at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The Apostle Peter meant by this that we are not just to think about the coming of the Lord once in a while, and take comfort from that great truth, *but we are to live this way!* We are to be waiting expectantly for the coming of our Lord when we will experience what Peter said in verse 9 of this chapter. (Read.) When the Lord comes, and we are in heaven, we will then experience “the end,” the completion of our salvation, the full realization of all that pertains to our salvation. This is not only when we will be in heaven, and not only when we will see the Lord and be with Him forever, but it will be when we are finally made like our Savior, conformed to the image of God’s Son. We can’t fully understand now what all of that will mean, but we know beyond any doubt that it will take place.

“The revelation of Jesus Christ” is the manifestation of His glory, the revelation of His glorious Person. His glory was veiled when He was here on earth before, but when He comes again, in the words of the Apostle John, “we shall see Him as He is.” What a wonderful day that will be!

“The end” that Peter was speaking about here in verse 13 is until the Lord returns, or until He takes us home. This is always to be before us, ever in our minds, the greatest of our expectations.

But how do we do this? Is this just a feeling that we have in our hearts, or is there something that we need to be doing, or some things that we need to be doing. How do we “hope”?

III. THE PRACTICAL DETAILS OF OUR HOPING (1 Pet. 3:13-16).

There are three things in this passage which the Lord tells us to do, and one thing we are not to do. And, as I understand what it means to “hope,” these are the details.

A. “Gird up the loins of your mind” (1 Pet. 1:13a).

This expression really came from the Lord. In Luke 12:35 we read that the Lord His disciples in connection with His return,

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.

The Apostle Paul also used this expression in Eph. 6:14, “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...”

Thayer, in his Greek dictionary, says that it is a metaphor which speaks of being prepared, and that it is

derived from the practice of the Orientals, who in order to be unimpeded in their movements were accustomed, when starting a journey or engaging in any work, to bind their long flowing garments closely around their bodies and fastened them with a leather belt.

So it would seem that the Apostle Peter was speaking about being prepared mentally, since he referred to “the loins of your mind.” This would mean that he was encouraging them to become informed and convinced about the truth of salvation, actually, the truth that Peter had been writing about in the preceding part of this chapter.

I think that all of us who know the Lord realize that when we are saved we need to “un-learn” a lot of things. By nature we have no place for God in our thoughts and lives. We are inclined to think of things in terms of our own welfare. The world’s standards and God’s standards are as different as night and day. The Apostle Paul in Rom. 12:1-2 spoken of “the renewing of your minds.” The only way our minds can be “renewed” or *girded up*, is by learning the truth of God’s Word. That is where we must start. We can’t get along just by what others know. We must make the truth our own through faithful reading, meditating, memorizing, and hearing the Word as it is taught, trusting the Holy Spirit to guide us into the truth. He is the One Who gives us understanding.

So as we wait, we are learning, and we are living, and serving the Lord, but it all has to be in harmony with the Word of God. This is basic. If we ignore this we will not be prepared for the coming of the Lord, and that which is to follow.

Secondly,

B. “Be sober” (1 Pet. 1:13m).

Cf. 1 Pet. 4:7 (where it is translated, “watch”); 5:8 -- where Peter used the same word.

We probably would not be surprised to know that this word means to be free from intoxication. A person who lives according to the wisdom of this world is like an intoxicated person. And when people are saved, they feel like a person who is getting over a drinking spree where they think

things and say things and do things if they were not under the influence of intoxicating drinks. A saved person will often say, “How could I ever have thought that that was right?” Or, “How could I have ever done such a thing?” Or, “How could I have ever lived like that?” It is only the Word of God that sobers us up, and makes us think straight about life and death and eternity.

It is easy for us to fall back into the old way of thinking and living, and so *watchfulness* is often connected in Scripture with being sober. We have to be constantly on our guard to make sure that we are living as God wants us to live, as He has taught us to live in His Word.

Please note how all of these points flow together. And this is true when we come to verse 14 where Peter spoke in terms of what we should not do.

C. “As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance” (1 Pet. 1:14).

The Apostle Peter has had much to say about the Word of God and what we learn from it. At this point he encouraged the Lord’s “children” to be “obedient children,” that is, not patterning their lives according to the way they used to live when they were ignorant of the Word of God, but by living in obedience to the Word of God.

“Not fashioning” is the very word that the Apostle Paul used in Rom. 12:2 when he wrote, “And be not conformed to this world.”

The fashion of this world is to be seen in the way people *think* and the way they *act*. It is a way of life that is entirely different from the way the Lord teaches us to *think* and *act* in His Word. “Lusts” are desires, usually sensual desires. But they can include other desires – the love of money, the love of pleasure, all connected with self-love. Peter said here that before these people were saved what they *thought* and the way they *lived* was guided by their ignorance – their ignorance of God, their ignorance of right and wrong, their ignorance of themselves and their true needs. Peter was saying that there needs to be a break with all of that. The person who claims to be a Christian, and yet has a lifestyle that has not been changed, is probably deceiving himself and is not a Christian at all.

But there is another side to this, a positive side, and this is the fourth point that the Apostle Peter made.

D. “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye

holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1 15-16).

Instead of being worldly and sinful, we are to be holy because that is what God is. Remember that our hope is not just to be in heaven, but our hope is that we will be like Christ. And one thing that we have to say about the Lord Jesus Christ, is that He was holy. God is holy. And the Spirit is the Holy Spirit.

And this holiness is to apply to “all manner of conversation.”

To us, our conversation is the way we talk. And the word that is used here in the Greek text includes our talk, but it includes much more than that. You will find if you consult your dictionary that this word used to mean *the way you live, your conduct*. It is a word which includes what you think, what you do, what you say, and ultimately all that you are as a person. This holiness is to extend to every part of our lives. And the new pattern of our lives is God Himself.

Now we all know that we have not reached that standard. And so we can easily understand that we have a life-long task ahead of us to become like God, and like our Lord Jesus Christ. As I have been saying over and over again, this is the end of our salvation, this is the goal God has set for every believer in Christ.

How is it to be realized? Certainly not in our own strength, but by the strength which the Lord gives to us, a strength that comes to us through the Word of God, and which is ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. “It is written,” *it stands written*, this was God’s purpose for His people in the Old Testament, and it is still His purpose for His people.

And here we have a good test for our faith, a test to show if we really have been saved. Do we want to be holy? Do we hate sin because of what it has done to us, and because of what the Lord Jesus has to experience in order to save us from our sins? Do we hate sin because God hates sin? Are the things that are abominable to Him, abominable to us? When God saves us, our attitude toward sin under goes a major change, and we find that we have a new desire to be like the Lord.

Concl: This is as far as a lot of people want to go in this first epistle of Peter. But this is the starting point in a life that is pleasing to God. There is much more to learn, but this is where we begin.

I know that what we have been reading about here in 1 Peter today is not new to many of you. But it behooves all of us to make an examination of

our own hearts to make sure that this is the way we are living, and that by the grace of God we are seeing changes in our lives that can not be explained in any other way than that we have become new creatures by the mighty work of God in our hearts as He has given us the faith to trust in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we come to the Lord's table, this is an excellent time for all of us to do some self-examination to see how our lives measure up to 1 Pet. 1:13-16.

After the Lord's Supper: Rom. 15:13