

1 Peter 1:13-21

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Introduction:

As a Christian, how do you live your life? What is the main goal of your life? And of your Christian life? Are they different or are they the same? Are you different or are you the same as the rest of the people around you? Francis Schaeffer called one of his books How shall we then live? That could also be the title of this sermon.

Context:

The first thing we have to notice about this passage is the therefore. As Graham says, if we see a wherefore we must ask what it is there fore. This is not a passage without a context. This is the continuation of what Peter was saying before. And it is in the context of the incredible and amazing things that God has done for us that Peter now starts to tell us how we should then live. We covered those in the previous sermons.

Doctrine:

If are to put a doctrine to this passage then maybe it should be this : **The great things that God has done for us should drive us through love to dedicate our lives to him and to be holy before him.**

Explanation:

Therefore, prepare your minds for action;

The first thing that Peter tells us is that we should prepare our minds for action. Many people today in the Christian walk relegate the mind and thinking to the dust heap when it comes to Christian. It is an experiential age in which we live and to experience Christianity is far more important than to think about it. After all, doesn't that lead to just dry doctrine and formalism? However, the results of this type of thinking are clear for all to see and the sight is not exactly pretty. But before we get too enthusiastic in that direction we do need to realise that often thinking Christianity has produced dry doctrine and formalism so we too have something to beware of. After all, the results of that type of thinking in history haven't been to pleasant either. So what does Peter mean here - prepare our minds for action. What he is recognising here is that the mind should lead the way in all that we do. If we have thought about what we are doing in the light of Scriptures, then our apply our will to doing it, then even if sometimes initially we don't feel like doing something, the emotions will follow. We have all experienced this. There is some task that we really don't want to do but we know that we have to. So we put our minds to it and put the nose to the grindstone as the saying goes and sometime later we find that we are actually enjoying what we are doing. Here we see it clearly - mind - will - emotion. So what are we set our minds on.

be self-controlled;

We are to prepare our minds for action and the first thing that Peter brings to our attention in this context is to be self-controlled. Another one of those things that the modern world does not like to hear. As Nike says Just do it. But self-control often says don't . It is interesting that in our



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modern world often we would see preparing our minds for action and being self-controlled as two opposites. A self-controlled person is not a double-minded person and is not buffeted around by the world. As **James 1⁶⁻⁸** teaches us, God does not listen to the double-minded person. The mind is very much involved in being self-controlled.

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

Peter also tells us that we are set our hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Again the strong emphasis on the mind - set your hope. Think about it. Train your mind so that your mind is set, it knows what to do and is not distracted by the tossing waves of the world. The Puritans understood this. They expected the worse from life and gave God the glory when it didn't happen. This was not a negative way of looking at life. No, rather they recognised that this world is sinful and so expected troubles and hardships. And being mentally prepared for them, they were not half as bad as they expected and so could praise God in the midst of their troubles and hardships. And we are not to set our hope on things which have no substance or of very little value. No, we are to set our hope on the grace to be given us when Jesus Christ is revealed. As we have seen before in this epistle, Peter has a very forward looking view of the Christian life. The things that we have now because we are Christians are great, the things we are still to receive when Jesus Christ is revealed is even greater. Then we shall see Christ face to face and be like him. We will enter into heaven, our eternal home. As Graham said this morning, this is the kingdom without end that can never be shaken. And then we will see much more clearly the effects of sin in this world and of the glorious things that God has done in bringing us out of this world.

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

And as obedient children we are not to conform to the evil desires we had when we lived in ignorance. Notice here that Peter assumes we will want to be obedient children. After reading the first part of this chapter what else can we be? And yet, because of the way sin was twisted us, we can read such a section and not even blink our eyelids. Or maybe it is because we have heard it once to many times. Oh it should not be! Once we were ignorant and had no understanding of what God had done for us through Christ. But now. Love should pour forth from our hearts. It should be our desire and our joy everyday to live and work and play with Christ in our minds. Oh how wicked is sin that even knowing all this, we can go through a day sometimes without even thinking of our Lord, except maybe at meal times when we say grace. It should not be. We are not to conform to those evil desires we use to have when we lived in ignorance, doing what we liked when we liked based on what was best for us. This does not mean that everything we did as non-Christians was as bad as it could possible be. No, rather it was done without thought of God. Even our best of deeds did not include the glory of God as one of its aims and so was not acceptable to God. Now we should look to the Scriptures to see how we should live.

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, “Be holy, because I am holy.”

And if we trust and obey then we will be holy, just as he who called us is holy. We are commanded to be holy in all that we do, because the God whom we serve is holy. We are to be different, separate from the world, in the world yet not of the world. Holiness is a way of life, walking in accordance with God's will. As John tells us Jesus said that if you love me you will keep my commandments. Lack of obedience shows a lack of love. And remember, without



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holiness you will not see God (Hebrews 12¹⁴).

Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

And we call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially. God cannot be bribed. Even as Christians the work that we do for the Lord down here on earth will be judged, as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 3¹⁰⁻¹⁵**. Let us read this passage. So you see, it does matter how you live here on earth and what you do with your life. So as Peter says, we should live our lives here as strangers in reverent fear. We are not of this world but we live in this world. We are strangers, pilgrims, waiting to enter the promised land. Now is our time of wilderness wanderings if you like, and like the Israelites of old, if we disobey then God will discipline us and punish us. And maybe we will be sent to wander for a literal 40 years in the desert. In **1 Corinthians 1¹⁰⁻¹³** Paul teaches us this. These things were written for our benefit. So do not think you can be a Christian and live as you like. To do so probably proves you are not a Christian, but if you are, then none of the blessings of God will flow your way. Rather punishment will come. That is why Peter says we are to live our lives in reverent fear. Perfect love drives away fear but our problem is we do not love perfectly, so as Proverbs tells us, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Isaiah was a prophet of God, someone whom we would assume was a holy person. And yet when Isaiah saw Jesus in all his glory what was his reaction - **Isaiah 6¹⁻⁵** and **John 12⁴¹**.

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

And we know that if we are redeemed we were redeemed at a price. A great price. Christ had to suffer and die for us. And from what were we redeemed? Peter tells us that it was from the empty way of life handed down to us from our forefathers. What does he mean the empty way of life? We see an increased rise in superstition in our days, as in medieval period before the reformation. People are looking for something to believe in. From astrology to inner healing, from tarot cards to UFO's, people are desperately seeking for something. The men turn to sport, the woman to soap operas. Life has to be more than it appears to be. Pubs and restaurants are mushrooming everywhere. People don't want to be at home. The questions of who I am and why is the world as it is are blocked out. Teenagers battle with those questions but slowly they are suppressed as they grow older. Teenagers want to change the world. Middle aged people don't want to be bothered. There is no answer so why keep asked the questions. Just keep busy and blame it on someone else. Your wife, your kids, the boss, the government, anybody, but not me. Ditch the wife or husband and have some fun with someone else. Ah yes, the empty way of life. It is a relevant now as it was when Peter was writing. And we were not redeemed from this way of life by something which is perishable in the light of eternity like silver and gold. No, by no means. We have been redeemed by something extremely precious, the blood of Christ, the Son of God. He was the lamb without blemish or defect. Like in the Old Testament times, when they took there lamb to be slain for their sin offering, it had to be a lamb without spot or blemish. And Christ was sinless, he was our lamb without spot or blemish and he went to the cross to die for you and me. Oh how that should melt our hearts and make us weep at our sinfulness.

He was chosen from before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

And this was not some plan that God thought of at the last moment. No, rather Christ was chosen



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from before the creation of the world, before Adam and Eve even existed, to be our sacrificial lamb. In the counsels of the Trinity, Christ agreed to the Father's plan that he should die for mankind and so be their sacrificial lamb. That was why God gave the Jews the sacrificial system. It was to point them to Christ. The wise among them understood that but most of the people didn't. God's plans are from of old. But Christ was only revealed in these last days. Note the term the last days. People call these the last days and indeed they are. From Pentecost until Christ returns are the last days. Let us look at **Hebrews 1¹⁻²** and we will see the same thing. These are indeed the last days. But notice who he was revealed for. For your sake, for yours and mine, that we might be redeemed by the precious lamb of God. The Messiah, the Holy One.

Through him you believed in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

It is through him that we have believed in God. God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead and glorified him so that he now sits at God's right hand from where he shall come to judge the living and the dead. And because of what God has done, your faith and your hope are in God. He has shown that Christ was the Messiah by raising him from the dead and his great deeds clearly show that fact. And so we can put our faith and our hope in God, knowing that he will never fail us. Oh what a great and almighty God we serve.

Application:

I think the application of much of what I have been saying tonight is fairly obvious. But let me make a few points.

- Christianity is not a once commitment and then you can live as you like. Christianity is a race, a fight, a warfare. It's being ready to fight against the world, the flesh and the devil every day. We do not just enter through the narrow way, but we must also walk the narrow way, as Christian in Pilgrim's Progress found out. There are many traps and snares along that path, but if we walk in the footsteps of Christ we will not go wrong. If we understand this it will save us from many disappointments in the Christian walk.
- One of the biggest problems today is the lack of discipleship. Many people become Christians and then are never taught what God requires of them. If you feel that you don't know enough about how to live as a Christian talk to Graham or Kenny
- We prove ourselves to be Christians by being obedient children. The Scriptures should always be our rule, in everything we do. That is the way to holiness. One of the big problems which we have to face as Christians is the experiential side of holiness. Holiness is not some wonderful feeling. Holiness can be expressed in terms of obedience and trust. But it is not only that. You can be holy and not feel holy. In John's gospel Jesus links love, obedience and joy. If we love God we will obey God. How do we obey God and so be sanctified or made holy. By hearing and doing God's will as found in the Scriptures. And if we are doing what God requires of us joy will come. There are times when holiness will seem like dry legalism. But persevere. Set your mind on loving God, be self-controlled and obey his commands and then joy will come. The difference between hackers and crackers?
- If there are any in the congregation tonight who recognise the empty way of life in which they are living and for whom the words of God have had an impact, I would encourage you to seek the Lord. Do not put it off, today is the day of salvation. Meaning in life is only to be found in Christ, for he is the Creator of this world and yourself. That does not mean that life will become a bed of roses. No, by no means. But life will have meaning and the things that



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happen will no longer be random events.

Conclusion:

Can it be said of you that you are holy? When your friends and colleagues and neighbours look at you, do they see something different? A person who walks by a different set of standards compared to the rest of the world? If that is true to you then I have only one thing to say to you - keep up the good work! If not, then take to heart this passage and leave here with minds prepared for action, being self-controlled and with your hope set fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Remember Jesus was different, radically different. So different in fact that they crucified him. Are you? Amen.



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