

1 Peter 1:17-25

“Motivation For Sanctification”

“Christian Conduct”, that’s the context that we’re entering into as we fall back into the flow of 1st Peter Ch 1. and Though Peter has given us practical points like girding up the loins of our mind, being careful what we put *into* our mind, the things we think *through* and meditate *on*, garbage in, garbage out; he’s exhorted us unto obedience to the word of God, that we’re to rest our assurance *completely* on the grace of God that’s to be brought to us at the appearing (or 2nd coming) of Jesus Christ but we’re not to take *advantage* of God’s grace as though it’s a cloak or a covering for our sin. We’re not to be disobedient children but rather obedient, not conforming ourselves to our former conduct or prior patterns of sin that were in our lives before Jesus Christ got a grip on us and by His grace saved us. There’s to be a notable and ongoing change in us. Saving grace will change your life, not only initially but there will be ongoing evidence of maturity as time goes by. Peter has made things very practical for us; yet you recall that he shared with us the *principles* that these practical things spill out of into the life of the believer, what are they? Vs 13, “Have Hope” and Vs 15-16 “Be Holy” have hope and be holy.

I am, you are a child of God; the idea being that if God is your Father, the apple doesn’t fall to far from the tree. As children we inherit the nature of our parents, in Adam we inherit a sin nature, in Christ we are partakers of the Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). So that if God is your Father and He is holy, than as His children we are to be holy as well (Vs 16) “because it is written, ‘Be holy for I am holy.’”

Now I didn’t draw those 3 words to your attention last week but I want to briefly before we continue on this week. What are the words? Vs 16, “*it is written*”, those 3 words carry absolute authority in the life of the believer. When the word of God (with in its proper context) is spoken into the believer’s life, that’s where the buck stops. There is no higher appeal than the word of God, Jesus used it to defeat Satan while being tempted in the wilderness. It’s available to you and me in the same way. But not only is the word of God a sword that we wield in spiritual warfare, the bible likens it unto food that feeds/strengthens us, water that washes us and a light that guides us in this dark world. God’s word has a sanctifying aspect in the life of the believer. Remember when Jesus was praying in John 17? He said in regard to His disciples, “*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*” John 17:17 Warren Wiersbe said, “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.”¹ Learning, loving, and living; which is to say that our mind, our heart, and our will should be submitted *to* and controlled *by* the Word of God.

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (1 Pe 1:16). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

If we're to keep clean in a filthy world we should be quick to ask the question, "What does the bible say?" "It is written" it's the word of God shares with us precepts, principles, and promises that will guide us in our decision making process. If your heart is to obey the Lord, He will guide you by His written Word through the person and power of the Holy Spirit.

Vs17

Throughout the remainder of this Ch Peter is just going to continue to pile on more motivation for practical sanctification; that is, appropriate Christian conduct.

He says, "If you're going to embrace the right to call *on* and cry out *to* the Father (as His child), than you need to receive the responsibility to conduct yourself in the *fear* of God as well." If you want help *from* God, than walk in the fear *of* God.

We spoke briefly about this Wednesday evening, the fear of God seems to be all but a thing of the past in the body of Christ today. People have taken a nonchalant approach to God as though God is their buddy, or their right hand man. God is the Sovereign Creator of all the universe, the Maker of heaven and earth Who is Holy, and righteous...and it's not that we can't cry out to God in a way that's true to who we are, but there should be a holy reverence for God in our lives. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God, for our God is a consuming fire. The fear of God will breed holiness in your life, if you fear God it will keep you in check. The bible says, "*The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;*" Ps 19:9 and Again, "*The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.*" Prov 8:13 One more, "*A wise man fears and departs from evil, But a fool rages and is self-confident.*" Proverbs 14:16 Which is to say that if you fear God you won't act foolishly, you won't engage in things that are in antithesis (or direct opposition) to Him. I read somewhere that reverent fear is evidenced by a tender conscience, a watchfulness against temptation, and avoiding things that would displease God. Those are fingerprints of the fear of God in a person's life.

Now, why all this emphasis on the fear of God as a necessary element of a believer's life? Because we're all going to stand before God in judgment and we're only deceiving ourselves if we think God will be somehow or for some reason partial toward us. He doesn't have any pets, He doesn't show personal favoritism, all of our works go on the same scale... It's like this; God won't show me favoritism, therefore I do well to fear Him.

The bible says, “*For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.*” Deuteronomy 10:17 and Again, “*And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.*” Col 3:23-25

Now I should point out here that the interpretation of Vs 17 doesn't lend itself to the idea that your salvation is in jeopardy. Why do I say that? Because salvation isn't based upon our works, when God is judging the believers works what is in jeopardy is your eternal rewards not your salvation. Your salvation is predicated upon the work of Christ and you receiving that by faith. Can one walk away from Christ? I believe the scripture supports the fact that you have a free will and can exercise that however you should so choose. However that's not what this is talking about. The fact is that we're all going to give account of what we've done, the things we've said, were they motivated by the flesh or the overflow Spirit of God in our lives. Those things that were of the flesh will burn like wood, hay, stubble. The things that we did/said led by and submitted to the Spirit will be precious rewards (that's what the bible teaches).

God will judge our works impartially, and the fact that we'll stand *before* Him and be judged *by* Him ought to motivate us to *fear/reverence* Him and lead lives that are pleasing *to* Him.

But I want to take a minute here and make an *application* that I think we do well to consider. The interpretation is exhorting us unto sanctification realizing that we're all going to be held to the same standard and that God isn't going to make an exception for us when we stand before Him.

Our works will be judged by the same standards and on the same level of scrutiny as everyone else's and that should motivate us to lead our lives in the fear of God, avoiding situations and temptations that lead us down ungodly paths.

But I think we can take the application to that next level of being careful not to take our salvation for granted. Here's the thing, God judges with out partiality; etch that in your heart, and in your mind. So many people seem to have this idea that somehow they will be an exception to the rule. As for the masses, or the multitudes it'll go just as God's word has said However for them, they've got something worked out, a mutual understanding between them and God. God understands their unique situation so for them it'll be different; listen, it won't be different for you. Now I realize that I would be hard pressed to get a confession out of someone saying that they believe God will treat them differently, yet they lead lives that demonstrate that reality. It's ok for them to get drunk, it's ok for them to have sex outside of marriage, it's ok for them to party or be foul mouthed or whatever, it's different with them.

Their sin is somehow justified before God, listen, God is not a man that He should lie, Has He not said it and will He not make it so? There will be no exception to the sin in your life, or in my life. If you walk in blatant transgression, continually willfully walking in opposition to the word of God, don't think you'll be an exception when it comes to the judgment of God.

Read carefully the book of Galatians, the letters to the Corinthians, these were groups of people (believers) that thought that God would be partial toward them, the sin in their lives. Paul said, "No way," Let's leave 1st Peter briefly and look together at Galatians Ch 5 (Vs16-21).

Along these same lines I'd encourage you to read 1st Cor 6:9-11, here's the point; if you lead a worldly lifestyle how is it that you think you won't reap the same reward as the world? God judges each one's work with out partiality. What do our works reflect? My works will manifest the position of my heart, and God is always searching our heart.

Listen to what God told Ezekiel, *"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: 'The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins.'* When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live."

Ezek 33:12-16 What's the point? If we lead lives of repentance, looking to be pleasing to God, God will honor that. If we disregard God's grace and lead whatever kind of sinful life we want to then God will honor that too. You wanna do what you wanna do that's fine, you'll receive the reward of your own ways. But if you will repent of your sin and lead your life in the fear of God, then God will strengthen you *in* that and reward you according to that.

Vs18-19

Following the flow Peter is saying, "Hey, realize what's going on here.

"Take a minute to think of what Christ did for you, what it cost the Lord to redeem you, now don't slap Him in the face with a reprobate lifestyle, be holy, honor Him, lead a life that's pleasing to Him, conduct yourself throughout the time of your stay here in fear, in a holy reverence for who He is."

You see what I mean by the fact that Peter is continuing to compile more and more concerning his case for holy living? Not only will the fear of God, the realization of the non-partial judgment of God move you to holiness, but beyond that if you will stop to honestly consider the price that He paid for your redemption, it will serve as further motivation for you to lead a life of sanctification/consecration unto Him.

God didn't just slap down a few bars of gold and silver to redeem you from the slave market of sin. It cost Him the priceless blood of His Son, Jesus laid down His life, poured out His blood for you, for me...you have been *redeemed*. What does that mean? To you and me the word "Redeemed" though it's important has lost a lot of its impact. To the ancient Roman world (in which Peter was writing) it was a word with incredible impact. It's estimated that there were as many as 60 million slaves throughout the Roman Empire. Freedom didn't come easy, nor was it cheap, but if enough money could be acquired your freedom could be purchased. Believe me when I tell you that the word "Redeemed" was a precious word to those to whom Peter was writing. They knew all about the cost, the value of redemption. Peter is reminding us that there was a steep price paid that you and I might be set free from the slave market of sin.

We were slaves to sin and as such we stood under the judgment of God, the bible is clear (Ezek 18:4) the soul that sins shall die, the problem is that *all have sinned* and fall short of the glory of God. Every single person who has ever walked the face of this earth (apart from Christ) has been condemned through sin to spend eternity separated from God, that's the price, the wage of sin...its death. To add to the predicament sinful man can't atone for sinful man, how can one thing that's dirty make another thing that's dirty clean? It can't happen. It takes the sinless to atone for the sinful, the innocent to make clean the guilty...we have a problem. All have sinned; there are none that are righteous, no not one.

So what does God do, He loves us, wants to spend eternity *with* us... He becomes one *of* us in the person of Jesus Christ and being fully human He qualifies to represent man before God, being fully God He's with out sin, blameless and perfect. He then takes all of our sin upon Himself, pays the full purchase price of our sin through the shedding of His blood, the laying down of His life that we by faith in Him might be found righteous before God and acceptable in His sight; freed from the chains of sin and the snare of death (that is, separation from God). The bible says it like this, "*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" 2 Cor 5:21 He was delivered up for our offenses and was raised for our justification.

We've been redeemed. From what? From our "aimless conduct." Aimless conduct is a good description of life apart from Christ. When we were with out Christ our conduct was aimless, like shotgun splatter, doing whatever, whenever, with whoever. Really this word, "aimless" points to an emptiness. Apart from the redemption of Christ life is empty, meaningless, with out any real purpose. Think about it, virtually everything in this world serves some purpose.

Every animal, every plant or tree, aquatic life, the sun the moon, the clouds the rain; it all serves a purpose. What's man's purpose? Apart from Christ we have none, the bible teaches that with out Christ life is *hopeless* (we're with out hope being with out God in the world). with out Christ life is *pointless*, and life is *aimless*, there's no real purpose or meaning to it, nothing of real substance found in it, we just drift through life aimlessly and empty.

But in Christ all of that changes. He sets us free from being enslaved to sin, He gives meaning and purpose to us, makes us whole and gives us hope...

Vs20-21

Couple things here #1 It's important to realize that the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross was foreordained before the foundation of the world. What does that mean? It means that the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross wasn't an accident, it was an appointment. The coming of Christ to die upon the cross of the sin of the world wasn't like unto an ambulance being sent to a wreck, the plan was foreordained before the foundation of the world.

God didn't start all of this and then when He realized it was getting out of control devise a secondary plan of action (a.k.a. the cross). The plan of redemption was set in motion before the world was ever created. Don't ask me to explain it or help you to understand how God knew what we would do, how we would sin, rebel and reject Him yet He created us and was willing to die for us anyway. If I were God I wouldn't have done that, the love of God transcends my own. All I can say is that He loves you that much, He knew that you would rebel against Him and yet in His love He was still willing to die for you, that you might know Him and be forgiven *by* Him and spend eternity *with* Him.

But that plan was only made *manifest* in these last days. God had it planned all along, but He only made it known at this time, in these last days. You should note that the bible qualifies the entire period of time from the 1st coming of Christ to the 2nd coming of Christ as the "last days." The book of Hebrews tells us, "*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,*" Heb 1:1-2

So from the time Jesus showed up the 1st time until the time He returns we're living in the last days. So when someone asks you if you believe we're living in the last days you can say with biblical authority, "I *know* we're living in the last days." and Every day we get closer to *that* day when He'll come again.

We also note (there in Vs 21) that we believe in God *through Christ*. Jesus made it very clear over and over again throughout His time on this earth that He was the exclusive means to the Father. They are a package deal, you can't believe in God but have a problem with Jesus. If you have a problem with Jesus you have a problem with God because Jesus said that He and the Father were one. He said that whoever doesn't honor the Son doesn't honor the Father who sent Him (Jhn 5:23). So He said that He was one *with* the Father and that He was the exclusive means *to* the Father. John 14:6, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" We *through Him* believe in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory.

Vs22

In our time of introduction we spoke of the cleansing agent of the word of God, it's a light *to* us, food *for* us, and water that washes us. "*How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.*" Ps 119:9 Jesus told His disciples, "*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*" John 15:3

So the word of God cleanses us, and Peter is saying that there's a progression, let God's word continue to have God's way in you. A pure soul should also produce love from a pure heart (we're still talking about holy living, motivation for sanctification). A changed life will result in a changed relationship with the other children of God.

Now there are 2 different words for "love" used in this Vs. When he talks about "sincere love" it's the word "Philadelphia" brotherly love, a sincere un-hypocritical love. When he says, "Love one another fervently" it's the word "agape" the all giving, non-self seeking, self sacrificing love *of* God that can only come *from* God. Here's the idea; holy living is really incomplete if it's not accompanied by love, yes God is holy therefore we should be holy, God is also love therefore we should love the brethren. John said how can you say you love God whom you've not seen and yet not love your brother whom you have seen? and What Peter is pointing out here is that our relationship with one another as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ will be directly impacted by our relationship to the word of God. Our obedience to God's word will lead us into a right relationship with one another. More love will be the natural byproduct of getting more of the word of God into our hearts.

Vs23-25

Here's what we need to know, the word of man, the work of the flesh is like the grass, or like the flowers of the field, they fade, wither and fall away. It doesn't last, the word and the work of God is eternal.

What does that mean? It means that the work of God's word in you is everlasting, the eternal *word* of God makes for an eternal *work* of God in you. Jesus told us that heaven and earth would pass away but His word (the word of God) would never pass away.

He told Nicodemus that that which is born of the flesh is flesh (it grows old withers and dies). But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Meaning that we've all been born once of perishable seed, the flesh, but we're *born again* of imperishable seed, through the word of God which lives and abides *forever*. Perishable seed, perishable product (the flesh) imperishable seed, imperishable product (the Spirit of God through the word of God). Your life in Christ is as everlasting as is His word, the seed through which you've been born again.

Therefore the change that's *taken* place in you and continues to *take* place in you (sanctification, practical holiness through the work of the Spirit of God by the word of God) will endure and not die, why? Because God's word endures forever and His word abides in You. The gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the sin of the world, it's not man's word, it's God's word; and if you will receive it, if you'll learn what it means to embrace it and submit to it, it'll change your life forever...to the glory of God.

Prayer Points:

Father may the seed of Your word root down into the soil of our hearts and do an eternal work in us to the glory of Your name. Teach us to lead lives of holiness, sanctification and consecration unto You. We thank You that You have redeemed us, You've made us free from the law of sin and death, now may we conduct our time here in holy reverence for You, leading lives truly set apart to You. and Father it blows our minds to think that You have loved us, Jesus that You've given Yourself for us from before the foundations of the earth, teach us to walk in Your love toward one another.

Before we close I want to give you the opportunity to respond to the redeeming work of Jesus Christ toward you, on behalf of you personally. So many people think, "You don't know where I've been, or what I've done, I'm sure I'm beyond redemption, God could never forgive someone like me, not after what I've done." Listen, the price has already been paid for you, Jesus has poured out His blood for you, forgiveness awaits you, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us of *all* sin, all you have to do is receive it, believe God for it. Jesus was made sin for you, that you might become the righteousness of God in Him, will you trust Him for it? If so why not open your heart right now and receive Jesus Christ let His redeeming work set you free today...