

**Living Hope:
Living Hope Calls Us to Holy Living
1 Peter 1:13-2:5**

Dr. Steve Horn

February 24, 2019

Text Introduction: Last week I began preaching from the book of 1 Peter. “Living Hope” is a phrase that we find in 1 Peter 1:3. This will be the theme of my preaching through this letter. Last Sunday, I shared three observations about Jesus being our Living Hope that we discover in chapter 1.

1. Our Living Hope rests in the essence of our salvation. Our salvation is provided by God’s grace through Jesus’ work, proved by Jesus’ resurrection, and perfected by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.
2. Our Living Hope results in eternal solutions for our temporary struggles. In 1 Peter 1:4-7, we see a comparison between our eternal promise and our temporary problems. We don’t need to minimize our problems, but we do need to keep them in an eternal perspective.
3. Our Living Hope is rooted in a personal relationship to our Savior. Perhaps, here is the best news of all. We can have a relationship to the ONE who brings us hope. Though life might sometimes overwhelm us, we are never without hope with Christ as our Savior.

So, what are we to do? Peter reminds us to bless the Lord and to rejoice, because after all, as believers, we are “receiving the goal of faith, the salvation of our souls.” (1 Peter 1:8)

As so often the case in the New Testament letters, theology prepares us for practices. Our beliefs should produce in us a certain behavior. We see that often with the word, “Therefore.” We see that in our text today. So, I want you think with me today how our “Living Hope Calls us to Holy Living.”

Text: ¹³Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. ¹⁵But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; ¹⁶for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy.** ¹⁷If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one’s work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers. ¹⁸For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. ²⁰He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you. ²¹Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

²²Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, ²³because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴For

**All flesh is like grass,
and all its glory like a flower of the grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever.**

And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that you may grow up into your salvation, ³ if **you have tasted that the Lord is good.**

As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—⁵ you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Introduction: I read that some years ago renovations were being made to Oxford University’s library. Buried in flooring that was removed was a copy of a portion of the King James Bible that likely had not seen the light of day since shortly after the King James was produced in 1611. Ironically, the fragment of Scripture buried for centuries was Leviticus 19—the very portion of Scripture that Peter quotes here in our text, “Be holy, because I am holy.” (Simon Ponsonby, *The Pursuit of the Holy: A Divine Invitation*, David C. Cook Publishing, 2010, p. 74-75.) Whether the Leviticus fragment was buried intentionally or coincidentally, we all seem to want to “bury” this call to holiness. However, we need an unearthing of Biblical, authentic, and personal holiness.

But, this word scares us. This word sounds boring. This word sounds like a long list of rules. Indeed, many have concluded their own list of rules of what is holy and not holy. This is exactly what the Pharisees of Jesus’ day did, but Jesus rebuked them for having the appearance of holiness, but not the heart of holiness.

For example, in one instance, Jesus quoted Isaiah, and said of the Pharisees, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines human commands.” (Matthew 14:8-9)

So, what is Biblical holiness?

Before, we uncover the rich truths of 1 Peter today, let’s just get before us a basic idea of Biblical holiness.

Here is the basic meaning of the word “holy.” It means to be separated. We could say to be completely different. When we say that God is holy, we are saying that He is different—one of a kind. No one is like Him. In the giving of the 10 commandments, God declared that the Sabbath day was holy. That is, He declared that this day would be different from all the rest of the days. In the Old Testament, we can talk about the holy Temple. That is, the temple is a different building from all other buildings. In contemporary culture, marriage is referred to as holy matrimony. That is, this relationship should be different from every other relationship.

So, here is the call. We are to be different; we are to be set apart. We ought to be distinguishable because of our relationship to Christ.

Motivation for Holiness—What are the motivations to holiness?

So, the beauty of this text before us today is that we are reminded of some motivations to holiness. Actually, the “therefore” of verse 13 calls us back to verses 1-12. What did we see there? We have a

Living Hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now, we learn that the Living Hope calls us to Holy Living!

How so? Look at the text and follow Peter's list of motivations.

- The Return of Christ

We see this in verse 13. He says, "Get your minds ready for action." Literally, he says, "Gird the loins of your minds." This is an obvious allusion to the way that men in those days tied up their robe around the waist for work or walking. Today, we might say, "Roll up our sleeves" or "Put our hard hat on."

This passage calls us to get serious about sin. God is serious about sin. We better be just as serious about sin. And, in the midst of this, we get His grace.

It is an old cliché, but has a lot of truth. Do I want to risk being found in sin when Jesus returns? Belief in the imminent return of Christ causes us to be mindful about our actions.

- Our Relationship to Christ

We see this idea in verse 14-16. He compares our former life to the life we now have in Christ. He refers to our calling we have in Christ. He refers to the character of God. And, we understand that this call to holiness is to be complete—"in *all* your conduct.

Augustine's famous testimony gives us evidence of how our relationship to Christ calls us or motivates us to holiness. One of his before Christ's mistresses came looking for him. She called out, "Augustine, Augustine, It is I." But, back came Augustine's reply, "Yes, but it is not I." He had been changed. His life was transformed. He was living out 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!"

- The Reckoning from Christ

We see this in verse 17. This is similar, I think, to the return of Christ, but just a reminder that we are going to face a reckoning—an accounting, a judgment. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

And this accounting is going to be done by a perfect and impartial judge. We are studying the letters to churches in Revelation in Revelation in chapter 2-3. As we study there, I am reminded that Jesus, the righteous judge of the church, is also the one who walks among the lampstands, the churches. We may deceive others, but we cannot deceive the ONE whose eyes are like a fiery flame. He sees. He knows. This is a motivation for holy living. Every word, every deed, every thought faces His judgment.

- Our Relationships to Others

We will say more about relationships later in our study of 1 Peter, but let's observe today that there is a connection to our holiness and the love that we display toward others. "Love one another constantly."

Help for Holiness—How do win the battle for holiness? (So What?)

- Keep Preaching the Gospel to Yourself.

In verses 18-21, Peter returned to the essence of the Gospel. We must keep holding up the Gospel. We preach the Gospel to others, but we must preach the Gospel to ourselves. We must preach the Gospel, sing the Gospel, and pray the Gospel. We must saturate ourselves daily with the Gospel. We must constantly be reminded that we are sinners in need of God's grace.

- Keep Feasting on God's Word.

The word will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from the Word. Beyond God's grace, the greatest practical tool that we have to wage war against sin is the Word of God.

John Owen, a Puritan preacher of the 1600s wrote a book, *Mortification of Sin in Believers*. In that book Owen said, "Be killing sin or sin will be killing you."

- Keep Tasting the Goodness of God.

Look at 2:3 now. "If you have tasted that the Lord is good." Christ is better than sin. In Christ, we are not sacrificing pleasure, we are gaining pleasure. We are finding our satisfaction in Jesus.

Recorded in the Psalms is the voice of God, "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it." (Psalm 81:10) Earlier the Psalmist said, "Better a day in your courts than a thousand anywhere else." (Psalm 84:10) And Jesus said, "A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance." (John 10:10)

Do we believe that?

- Keep Growing with the People of God.

We are becoming a spiritual house, a holy priesthood? Being connected to the church is a strategy for winning the war with sin. I know many of people who have attempted to live holy lives outside the context of a local church, but I know none who have been successful.

Maybe this kind of message leaves you feeling overwhelmed? Don't be. Let me leave you with this. "Our worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace." (Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*)