

A Study of First Peter

Knowing the Secret to a Pure Life (1 Peter 1:13-25)

“Salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred Scriptures . . . Apart from obedience there can be no salvation, for salvation without obedience is a self-contradictory impossibility.”

~ A. W. Tozer

I. An Introduction

In the opening of this letter, Peter celebrates all that the Lord has done for believers. From their secured inheritance to the privilege of living in the days of God’s fulfilled promises, believers can rejoice. Based upon all that the Lord has accomplished for His people, Peter instructs the believers in their proper response. Peter will specifically layout four commands in this section: a call to hope, an edict for holiness, a command to live in reverence, and a mandate to love. As we explore this section, note that what God has done for us in Christ serves as the basis for why and how we should live our lives.

II. The Expectations of a Glorious Salvation (1:13-25)

A. A Call to Hope (v. 13)

Referring back to both our “living hope” in verse 3 and “grace” in verse 10, Peter calls for the believers to focus on the consummation of their salvation in the future.

The means in which “to set one’s hope completely on this grace” is to be mentally resolved and prepared. Paul delivers a similar exhortation in Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.” “Thinking in a new way does not happen automatically; it requires effort, concentration, and intentionality” (Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 78).

B. An Edict for Holiness (vv. 14-16)

The second imperative included in this section is a call to be holy. Observe what Peter writes concerning this command:

- *Manner of living holy:* They are called not to be passive in their spiritual walk. Mere “lip service” to the Christian life is inconceivable to the New Testament writers.
- *Model for living holy:* Since God is holy (Isa 6:3; Hos 11:9), His people are required to be holy.
- *Extent of living holy:* As one scholar aptly notes, “holiness affects not only our personal relationship to God but all of our relationships. It affects all you do” (Marshall, *1 Peter*, 53).

- *Basis for living holy*: Two reasons are given in this passage. First, God “called” us. Here the grace that has been extended to believers precedes the demand to be holy. Second, the summons to walk in holiness is grounded in Scripture (e.g., Lev 19:2).

C. A Command to Live in Reverence (vv. 17-21)

Reiterated throughout Scripture, individuals are to possess a healthy fear of the Lord (see Deut 4:10; Prov 9:10; Eccl 12:13). Rather than fearing one’s persecutors, an individual is to fear God. As observed by one writer, “The fear of God may well include a recognition of the futility of human opposition to the divine, especially for those who are God’s enemies, but for those who follow God, fear grows from the respect and honor of which God is worthy as God” (S. E. Porter, “Fear,” in *NDBT*, 497).

Note the following reasons Peter lists for this third imperative:

- Our lives are brief, then we will face *the* Judge—the Lord who judges with impartiality (e.g., Deut 10:17; Phil 3:20). Observe that Peter also highlights the Lord as our Father.
- We live our lives in deep gratitude and in wonder at what the Lord has done for us. Our inheritance was extremely costly, well-thought out, and personal.
- We can rest with certainty in a God who fulfills His promises. The resurrection of Christ validates the power and love of our great God! Indeed, “a life of holiness is one in which God is prized above all things, in which believers trust and hope in his goodness” (Schreiner, 89).

D. A Mandate to Love (vv. 22-25)

Loving one another is “no minor issue, but a central concern of both our author and the whole NT [New Testament]” (Davids, *1 Peter*, 77). Peter argues that “love” is a goal of one’s conversion.

“you have purified yourselves” - The tense of this Greek verb signifies that this was a past action that has ongoing consequences.

The goal of our salvation is to love, while the basis of our love is God’s Word, namely, the Gospel (e.g., Eph 1:13; Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 1:8).

vv. 24-25 - Peter utilizes Isaiah 40 to substantiate the power of God’s Word. Interestingly, the context of this Old Testament passage is God’s assurance to His exiled people that He will deliver them. Such words of assurance are a great comfort to those who are undergoing persecution. No government, community, or individual can thwart the plans and promises of God. This assurance should only foster a greater love for one another.

III. Intersect

As followers of Jesus, we need to be living our lives with an eternal perspective. How do we specifically live out this non-perishable outlook in the following areas of our lives:

Finances: *Luke 12:22-34, especially verses 33-34* -

Time-management: *Matthew 6:33* -

Personal relationships: *1 Thessalonians 3:11-13* -

Conversation: *Colossians 4:5-6* -

Thought-life: *2 Corinthians 10:3-5* -

“Faith has in it the recognition of the certainty and the justice of a judgment that is coming down crashing on every human head; and then from the midst of these fears and sorrows and the tempest of that great darkness there rises up in the night of terrors the shining of one perhaps pale, quivering, distant, but divinely given hope, ‘My Saviour! My Saviour! He is righteous; He has died; He lives! I will stay no longer; I will cast myself upon Him!’” ~ Alexander MacLaren

For further thought . . .

Based upon our study this morning, you may want to spend some additional time this week reflecting on the following:

Reread 1 Peter 1:1-25. Make a list of what Paul identifies as imperishable (eternal) with that which is perishable (temporary):

Perishable

Imperishable

What perishable things of life are most likely to demand your attention and love? List several below.

How does a focus on those things which are perishable diminish your ability to love others well?