



We're in a series called, "Exiles: Hope Between Two Worlds." In studying the book of 1 Peter, we follow as Peter's audience lived as exiles in their world and what that might mean for us in our day. Specifically today, we're going to see Peter challenge his audience on how to live in an upside-down world. They lived between how they were called to live because of their relationship to Jesus, and how the world around them lived.

We can see that in our day. Maybe you're not facing threatening environments, but the world seems to grow more murky each day with the dissolution of a moral standard, the chaos world disasters, and the day-to-day confusion of how best to live in a world that is seemingly upside-down.

When I was in high school, I walked to school each day with some friends from our neighborhood. It was a few miles from our home (everyone in our area walked) through several subdivisions. My friends were not particularly wild, but they participated in what you can imagine high school students participate in doing. I had given my life to follow Jesus prior to my 9th grade year, and I was still learning what it meant to be in relationship with Jesus. But I was starting to see the difference of how God was calling me to live and how my friends lived. As I left the house each day to walk to school, I would yell, "Bye, mom" and my mom would respond, "Remember who you are." I knew what she was trying to do, but I would respond in a sarcastic and exasperated way with our house address: "I'm Dominic Rivera, 19 Arbory Way, Laurel, MD 20707." She obviously wasn't concerned that I would forget where I lived, but she was reminding me of my new life in relationship to Jesus, to not participate in the ways of living that are no longer part of who I am.

In these verses, Peter is going to remind his audience how they live matters, and exhort them to live in alignment with who they are in Christ.

### **Future Hope**

**Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming (1 Peter 1:13).**

With, "therefore," Peter brings in everything that Dan talked about: salvation in Jesus that is guarded by God, that prophets spoke about, and angels longed to see. He then describes two aspects of the thought life. "Minds that are alert" in the original

language carries the connotation of action, similar to our phrase, "roll up your sleeves." He then adds "sober," used figuratively, meaning to be clear-minded, free from outside control.

With a clear focus, actively set your hope on the grace to be revealed. Hope in the NT is not wishful thinking, but assurance that God will do what He says. That assurance of future hope is based on the past act of resurrection of Jesus.

This is the third time that Peter has mentioned the revelation of Jesus in His return (cf. v.5,7). As one commentator puts it, "This phrase pictures not so much the return of one who is absent as the unveiling of one who has been with us all the time." (IVP)

Yet, even though Peter is exhorting his audience to be active in setting their hope on God's future, Peter is going to challenge them in how they live here and now. Peter has the perspective that what God will do in the future means something for how we live here and now. How should we live in the here and now?

### **Why Does Future Mean for How We Live Now?**

**As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 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" (verses 14-16).**

Abandon how you formerly lived. This is very important to understand: Peter and the other NT writers see a distinction between how his audience lived before Jesus and how they live now that they know Jesus. In essence, he says, "That is who you used to be, but it's not who you are now." They were tempted to go back to their former way of life, and interestingly, the temptation was not by peer pressure, or better parties, or more friends, but they were tempted to return to their former way of life by the draw of evil desires.

We tend to think of desires as generally good and to be followed. "I feel like doing/eating/going..." and we do it. But the Biblical writers had a different perspective on desire. Desire can be good, but it could also be dangerous. One example of each: Psalm 37:4 describes desires shaped by God for our good. 1 John 2:16 speaks of desires that come from outside influence and draw us away from God's best for us and ultimately lead to destruction.

This is why I tell people, not everything you feel is true. What you feel is real. I'm not questioning if you feel it, but it's not

necessarily true nor good for you. Sin, for example, is pleasurable. The enemy will tell you that, and he's right. He will play on desires. But what he **doesn't** tell you is it's a fleeting pleasure (Heb. 11:25) and can ultimately lead to destruction. Feelings/desires should walk in step with truth, like two people walking hand-in-hand. Desires need a standard, a reference point. For me, the Bible and its call to live like Jesus is that standard for anyone who follows Jesus.

Apart from Jesus, Peter's audience didn't have a standard; they lived in ignorance. But now that they know Jesus, they have insight into truth and can correctly measure the desires that are tempting them away from life with God.

### **Be Holy in All That You Do**

Instead of entertaining those evil desires, the command is to be holy in all you do. Holy, in the negative sense, means to put away the former ways. In the positive, we intentionally choose to live as God has designed us to live. That's what "do" means—it's not simply another task, but the original language has in mind our entire lifestyle. Holiness is a calling out of, and a calling into a way of life modeled after God. Put another way, holiness is what happens when the divine transforms the ordinary.

We often do think of the ordinary things of life—how you work, raise your children, treat other people, speak, shop, coach baseball, use social media, have a meal—as an opportunity to practice holiness. But all of life should take its cue from the nature of God incarnation. God comes in the flesh and lives in the ordinary—walking, eating, sleeping, laughing—yet He does in holiness.

Sometimes holiness is easy. A few years ago, I went to a monastery for a personal retreat. At a monastery, holiness is everywhere; it's palpable. But after the monastery, I returned to my town, to cafes and conversations of everyday life of doubt, pain, joy. It's easy to see holiness in the everyday. But we're not made for the monastery. We're made for everyday. And part of the difficulty of living holy through the ups and downs of everyday is that we have to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us in the way of Jesus.

### **What is the Reason to Live Holy?**

Then Peter explains why we are commanded to live holy. It's not a command for command's sake or checking the obedience box. He gives two reasons: one explicit and one implicit in the text. First, we are to be holy because this is who God is ("just as He... is"). (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7). We are to model our life by the nature of God. Second, we are to be holy because this is who we now are in Christ. This is now our identity, and we are to live in accordance with it, to live into our identity in Christ. Some of the most deep, heart-searching conversations that I've had with Christian friends who have decided to act or live outside of

God's design are not when I've given them 50 verses that they breaking, not when I guilt them into "doing better," but when I've started the conversation with, "But that's not who you are."

That's the command—be holy—and the reason for the command. But why does it matter if we live holy? Peter next gives several reasons.

### **Why Does it Matter if We Live Holy?**

**Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear (v. 17).**

First, we have a Father to whom we will give an account. His description of God's role as our Father ties back to verse 14 and the call to obedience. The Biblical picture of God as Father is God as good (Matt. 5:45) and gives good to us (James 1:17). We obey Him as Father because He calls us to obedience and He has the best for us. Not only are we to obey, but we will one day give an account of how we spent our life. Part of God's future is that you will account for what you did with what God gave you (cf. Matt. 16:27, Rom. 2, 1 Cor. 3:13, 2 Cor. 5:10).

**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 ancestors, (v. 18)**

Second, we have been redeemed. Redeemed comes from a root word that means "to pay a ransom." In the ancient world, a slave would pay a sum of money to the temple of a god, and the temple would then pay the slave owner to set the slave free. He was redeemed.

Peter begins a contrast in saying that the follower of Jesus is redeemed from their former life (cf. v.14), which was empty (or "vain"), perhaps drawing an image of bondage. But the payment of their redeemed is not with gold or silver (cf. v.7).

**...but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake (verses 19-20).**

Rather, it is the precious blood of Jesus. The precious blood of Jesus says something about God and something about you. His precious blood shows the extent to which God would go for you to have new life. It cost Jesus His life to free you from your empty life. It cost Jesus His life to give you yours. His precious blood also shows how valuable your life is. We spend a lot of time, money, and relational energy trying to matter to someone. We plead and yearn that someone would see us as valuable, that someone would acknowledge value in us. We forget the precious blood of Jesus. His death means that your life is of eternal value to God. No one has done for you what God has done for you. Even if no

one else sees you as valuable, your life has value to God. And He proved it.

As if that weren't enough, Peter says that this redemptive plan was set in motion before the creation of the world. There is a contrast in Greek in this phrase that highlights God's divine initiative hidden since creation but now revealed in Jesus. And it was "for your sake." Look at creation—all of that came into existence **after** God sent His Son as your means of redemption. That is how immense His love is for you!

**Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God (v. 21).**

As a result, your faith and hope are rooted in God. Your faith and hope—you—are secure in God. No one has done for you what God has done for you, and nothing can remove you from His hand. If He is your greatest treasure, your joy will be to live in the way of your heavenly Father in the midst of an upside-down world.

Charles Spurgeon, a pastor in England in the 19th century, sums this up well in his typical poetic language: "Ye are Christ's. You are his by donation, for the Father gave you to the Son; his by his bloody purchase, for he counted down the price for your redemption; his by dedication, for you have consecrated yourself to him; his by relation, for you are named by his name...Labor practically to show the world that you are the servant, the friend, the bride of Jesus. When tempted to sin, reply, I cannot do this great wickedness, for I am Christ's...When wealth is before you to be won by sin, say that you are Christ's, and touch it not... When the siren song of pleasure would tempt you from the

path of right, reply, Thy music cannot charm me; I am Christ's... Be thou ever one of those whose manners are Christian, whose speech is like the Nazarene, whose conduct and conversation are so redolent of heaven, that all who see you may know that you are the Savior's, recognizing in you his features of love and his countenance of holiness."

### **How Can Personal Holiness Impact Our World?**

What should we do with this incredible news of redemption in Jesus and the call to live holy?

It's easy to keep this to ourselves. Part of savoring and treasuring God's love for you in Jesus leads to introspection. But there are people in your world who have never heard of what God has done for them. They are the people that you share a fence with, the parents you stand on the sideline beside, the colleagues you work with, the fellow students you learn among. You have an incredible opportunity to turn their attention to Jesus. They may never come to a church, but they will listen to you—what you value, how you spend your life, what matters to you—and who you matter to. And God will provide an opportunity for you to share how He is at work in your life and theirs.

Living holy certainly has personal implications for you. But what if living holy also means that we live beyond ourselves? What if God's holy call for you is for you to show the love of Jesus to someone in your sphere of influence?

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

© 2017 Central Peninsula Church South, Redwood City, CA  
Catalog No. 1427-3S

---

This message from Scripture was preached on Sunday, January 29, 2017 at Central Peninsula Church South  
1005 Shell Blvd. | Foster City, CA 94404 | 650 349.1132 | [www.cpcweb.org](http://www.cpcweb.org). Additional copies available on request.