

XI. I Peter in Biblical Perspective

The Elect in the Exile

“Elect Exile Lifestyle Axiom #1—The Hope that Purifies”

I Peter 1:13

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In our study of I Peter we have come to a new section which covers I Peter 1:13–21. It will take a couple of studies to work through it. This is the Word of God. God’s Word is the truth. I Peter 1:13–21 says [13] *Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. [14] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” [17] And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, [18] knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. [20] He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you [21] who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I love my Bible and I’m grateful to have the privilege to read it, study it and am overwhelmed at the privilege to preach it. I’m also grateful for the calling and opportunity to serve you as a pastor/teacher. If I were in a situation where I could only have one book out of the 66 books in the Bible in order to know how to live for Christ until He comes again there is no doubt which book I would choose. This year our theme is a life style of evangelism and discipleship where we are staying on mission as God has called us to evangelize and disciple. We are staying on message with the whole counsel of God with the spear point of the Word of God, the Gospel of God. We want to stay in ministry through worship, evangelism, loving each other and disciple making.

Why are we in I Peter? I do not know of another book in the Bible that in the succinctness and content is more appropriately framed to help, guide, inform, instruct, and inspire us into how we live for Christ from our conversion to our home going or His coming for us. In other words, if I was only allowed one book to know how to live for Christ, hands down it would be I Peter.

If I only could have one book to understand the Gospel as the foundation, formation and motivation of the Christian life then it would be the book of Romans. If I could only have one book to correct legalism in the Gospel which are those who arrogantly think it’s what they do that saves them or allows God to save them and that would be the book of Galatians. If I only had one book to ward off those who would misuse the Gospel and make it a book of licentiousness/libertinism where they think because they are saved by grace they can live anyway they want to then that would be the book of James. If I only could have one book to show a Christian world and life view then it would be the book of Genesis because it has the origin of everything – creation, redemption, providence, etc. But again the book that informs me of how I

am to live, the foundations, motivations and framing of my Christian life from the time I'm converted until I go to be with Jesus is the book of I Peter.

I Peter 1:1–12 is composed of this majestic praise to God which we have recently finished studying. Here Peter introduces himself, makes a prayer and then he writes about 178 word doxology of three stanzas praising God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for our great salvation and then he finishes in I Peter 1:12. Then he moves to a new section and we know it's a new section because he starts it with the word 'therefore.' This word tells us two things. One is that there is a new section coming and two that everything in the new section is dependent upon what was in the previous section.

This new section of I Peter 1:13–21 has four divine commands but one of those commands stands at the pinnacle. The other three commands are the enabling commands to get you to the pinnacle command. This is why I used 'axiom #1' in the title of this study. The word axiom means a self-evident truth not necessary to solve the issues that would be before you for it is something you start with to solve the problem. It is a self-evident, repeated, dependable truth that you work from. In the next couple of studies we will get a number of axioms from Peter as to how to live for Christ as elect exiles.

Peter tells us we are on a pilgrimage. We are sojourners, aliens and we're on a journey as exiles. One of the first times I went to Israel they gave us a certificate at the end that basically told us we had completed our pilgrimage. That was something we had wanted and because of that we knew there was a certain place we had to start to get there. The destination of what we wanted informed us of our first steps. Peter is about to give us our first steps as elect exiles. Elect tells you who you are in Christ, before the foundation of the world when God the Father placed His electing love upon you, sent His Son to a cross in your place to die an atoning death, rose again and declares to the Father that all of the elect whom He has given Him, He loses not one and He will raise them up on the last day. Exiles tells you who you are for Christ. Peter has put together a doxology celebrating your salvation and have studied it for ten studies.

Now we come to this new section. Election is who you are by God's grace in Christ and exile is how you live by God's grace for Christ. So how do I get started on this pilgrimage, this journey as an exile, an alien? He gives us our first step and that is axiom number one which is in I Peter 1:15–16 which says [15] *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."* To effectively, faithfully and fruitfully live for Jesus Christ in this world as one who has been saved by God's grace is the pursuit of personal holiness.

This is one you have to get and you have to get it straight. Here God has given you a command but He did not give you this command until He told you who you were in Christ by grace, lest we think our obedience to His command is what saves us. In other words, in the first twelve verses of this doxology it is praise and worship to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for being sprinkled clean with the blood of Christ, washed of your sins, been forgiven, clothed with His righteousness and declared innocent. So it is praise to God for all that has been done to you that was unmerited, undeserved and unwanted but the God whom you didn't want wanted you and came to do for you what you could not do for yourself. In other words, you are positioned in perfect holiness and you have to know that before you start the journey to personal holiness.

If you don't know that then the tendency is that you think your pursuit of holiness that saves you and you will dummy down what sin is because you are falling short or we will think we're perfect like the rich young ruler and become arrogant or we will constantly be aware of not

being able to climb this mountain to holiness and we get depressed. No, come to Christ and just as the hymn *Just As I Am* says,
*Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

In Christ, you have a positional, perfect holiness and it's the righteousness of Christ that wraps you up. Now you're ready for the pursuit of holiness, not for salvation but for your Savior who has secured your salvation. Because I'm saved my life is Christ's and my life is for Christ. He is not my rabbit's foot or my coach, He's my life and because of that my life is His. Now I'm not going to live this life perfectly but that's the commitment. My commitment is the pursuit of holiness.

The word holy means unique. My God is unique. Holy is the Lord. When the Bible talks of heaven it seems as though it's always saying 'holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty.' They don't say it in the normative and the comparative but they say it in the superlative. There is none like Him. He is high and lifted up, majestic. The Lord God alone is worthy to be praised and honored and glorified for that is our God. He now says that since He has placed His holiness upon you positionally as you are wrapped in My holiness, now you be holy. You be uniquely Mine.

Think of it this way. God in His grace has preserved me for salvation. Now because of His grace I reserve myself for Him alone. I am Yours. You have saved me and You are a great Savior. That is why the word 'therefore' is there. Peter is taking you back to see that because of your great salvation the pinnacle axiom command to be effective for Jesus Christ as an elect exile are those who pursue holiness that I am His and He is mine. [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God* (I Corinthians 10:31). [1] *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship* (Romans 12:1).

In other words, this is my life for You. It is not accident that the commands are not given until the assurances of salvation through the finished, full, free, sufficient work of Christ has been documented for you in those opening verses of I Peter 1:1–12. And it's no accident that the commands to live for Christ flow from the worship of God. I know that your worship will determine the effectiveness of your witness. I know that what happens on the Lord's Day directly effects what happens every other day. That's why Peter starts with worship, who we are in Christ and then out of worship and who we are, this is how we live for Christ.

The first command is to be holy and the attribute of attributes of God is His holiness. God is so adamantly holy that the thresholds have enough sense to tremble in His presence. That God is in you and that God has saved you. That God has now called you to belong to Him and you give yourself to Him. So how do I start the journey in the pursuit of holiness as an elect exile? Let's look more closely at I Peter 1:13 which says [13] *Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Another translation starts this verse out by saying 'having girded the loins of your mind' which would be a direct translation. This girding your minds for action is now preparing your minds for action and being sober minded. So we have a girded mind, a prepared mind and a sober mind to set our hope fully on the grace that will be brought to us at the revelation of Christ.

So the supreme command is to be holy as He is holy and he has preserved you so you reserve yourself for Him alone in your pursuit of personal holiness. How do we do this?

The first thing He gives us is an enabling command to set, fix your hope *fully* on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Have you ever heard someone tell you ‘that person is so heavenly minded they are no earthly good’? I think I know what people are trying to say with that but please dismiss that. You will never be earthly good until you get rightly heavenly minded. You are in a hostile world. They don’t give parades for the Gospel in Christians. They will persecute you. In the book of Peter we find out they are putting them to death by fire.

I just read about five reformers during the time of Queen (bloody) Mary who were tortured also by fire but counted it all joy to serve for Christ. Living where we live with the blessings of two great awakenings we have no idea what the majority report has been for 2,000 years and almost all around the world. It is persecution and death for Christians and that’s what it has been in Asia Minor to whom Peter is writing this letter to. Peter is telling them if they want to stand firm, be an effective witness and faithful for Christ then be holy. Belong to Him. If Jesus is nothing more than a side show occupation for you then you will never be faithful.

To pursue holiness we need to keep looking ahead to the coming of your Savior. Set your singular, heartfelt hope fully, not partially on the coming of your Savior with the new heavens and the new earth because when He comes there will be more grace coming according to I Peter 1:13. We have past grace where He has saved us from the power, persuasion, penalty and the position of sin. He has given you a new heart, a new record, a new family, a new perspective and that’s God’s past grace secured for you at the cross. Now He is calling you to be holy by His present grace with a new life for Jesus Christ so that now the practice of sin is being crucified.

How do I walk now for Christ? There are two ways. One is to remember who you are in Christ, the past grace that saved you and anticipate the future grace that is coming to you. I am going to get a new body and I will be transformed to be like Jesus Christ. I will no longer have to kill sin because I won’t be able to sin for I will be like Him. I will no longer have to meet with my accountability brothers. I have a grace that is coming to me that will give me a new body, a new home in a new heavens and a new earth and I will no longer see my Savior by faith but I will see Him by sight. That grace is coming right now. It is not something that is going to come but it’s grace that is on the way.

In the original for I Peter 1:13b where it says [13b] *set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*, the literal translation says it is being brought to you right now. I can hear that trumpet and that voice and I say ‘shout angel shout!’ The coming of Christ is secured. My salvation is secured in my Savior and my Savior is coming for me. This is secured in Christ and for Christ.

So what do I need to do to set my hope on that? I have all kinds of other hopes that try and filtrate my life like the next house or the next vacation or my next job or if my favorite team wins the national championship. None of that will fulfill us eternally. Our hopes get directed everywhere. It’s amazing how this world is so adept at calling our hopes everywhere but the one place and the one Person where they ought to be. Set your hope fully on Christ and not only on Christ but Christ coming for you and bringing the consummation of His grace to you. That is what enables you to stand firm now. To get my mind and my hopes fixed there I need some help and Peter tells us how to do it.

To get our hope fixed we have to get our mind fixed and our mind has a lot of ‘stinkin thinkin.’ When you got saved you received a new heart, a new record, a new family, a new home and a new life but you didn’t get a new mind. But you do have the Word of God and the Spirit of God and by the Spirit of God with the Word of God you can have a renewed mind. Romans 12:1–2 says *[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Don’t let the world give you what you put your mind to. The word transformed here is the same word of how a caterpillar gets to be a butterfly. Have that ugly thinking to get transformed, metamorphosized into what is beautiful, pure and true. Don’t be pressed into the world’s mold but renew your mind by loving the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind. Peter is saying that having girded your minds be sober-minded with a prepared mind and fix your mind and all your hopes on the coming of Christ which strengthens you to live for Christ now and that’s the first step in the journey of holiness for Christ.

Don’t miss the illusion here. This is the way I thought of this for I had heard these things all my life. Having done your homework, take your bath and go to bed. I heard those words almost every night and I knew what my mother was telling me to do. I was to go to bed but I couldn’t go to bed until I took my bath and to take that bath I needed to get my homework done. That is the flow here in I Peter 1:13. Having prepared your mind, be sober and now you can fix your hope fully on Christ. So to fix your hope fully on Christ you have to be sober-minded and to be sober-minded you have to have your mind in readiness.

Did you come today to worship mindfully, with a prepared mind? When we wake up each day and want to set our hope on Christ, do we go to the Word? How do you do that? You do that by having prepared my mind and sober-minded. When Peter talks about girding up your mind he is taking us right back to the book of Exodus where the Israelites were delivered from the bondage of slavery, and now we’re delivered from sin as it applies to us today. Now the Israelites will go on a *journey* to the Promised Land. A journey where God has promised the Promised Land. They were to keep their eyes on the Promised Land as God took them on this journey to get there but I’m going to give you this meal, the Passover, and when they rise up from it, they were to gird up their loins, take up their staff and follow Him.

That is the picture Peter is giving us here. Christ has saved us, delivered us from our sins and now we are to gird up the loins of our mind. Here’s what it means to gird up your loins. Whenever a man needed to run, fight or do strenuous activity he would need to gird up his robe or it would get in the way and he would do that by pulling the back of the robe between his legs to the front and tuck it into his belt so that it would then be more like pants. Then the man would not be entangled to do the work set before him.

Another way to put this, would be to say ‘roll up your sleeves and go to work!’ Gird up your mind to go to work. You can’t get the work done until you roll up your sleeves. Or perhaps another way to put it would be ‘Fasten your seat belt for it’s going to be a bumpy ride or it’s time to go.’ We’re not going until you fasten your seat belt. Get your mind ready because if you don’t this world is going to fill your mind with everything it possibly can through songs, plays, books, pictures, entertainment but you have to fill your mind up to have it prepared. You are to have it ready by having it prepared.

Now I told you how I went to bed every night growing up and here is how I got up in the morning. My mother would say ‘Son, having made your bed, put on your clothes and go to

school.’ So I knew she was telling me to go to school but she also was saying not to leave the house for school without putting clothes on. And when I got out of the bed to put my clothes on I was to also make up my bed. This is how we are to prepare our minds. Having prepared your mind be sober.

What is the opposite of sober in the Bible? We are told in the Bible not to be drunk but to be sober so the opposite is drunkenness or intoxication. That is what the world does with us. This isn’t just with alcohol but I’ll use that one. Some will say they need alcohol to stimulate the conversation. Then we find out scientifically that alcohol doesn’t stimulate. It’s a depressant. It disorients, depresses, and disconnects. If you don’t believe this then give someone enough of it and watch what they do, listen to them talk with their slurred words. Then it will remove all inhibitions and they become wide open for anything that comes to them. We are not to be like that.

The world doesn’t just intoxicate with alcohol. We can be intoxicated by food, sex, drugs, pleasure, entertainment for it has all kinds of ways to intoxicate us but we say ‘no’ to being intoxicated by the darkness of the world. We want to be sober-minded where our mind is ready and now sober. So that we don’t lose control but our mind is under control. I have found that the more I fill my mind with what is good the more I fill my heart up with what is good and the less room I have for that which would destroy my marriage, my ministry and my life.

I Peter 1:13 says *[13] Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* This makes us ready for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Here is the takeaway. There is an unmistakable rhythm to the Christian life. Know who you are in Christ in order to know what to do for Christ. It is not what you do that saves you. The rhythm is to know who you are in Christ and then do His commands. It is because you are saved which leads to what you do. Please get this rhythm in your life.

Here is an illustration from a high school I attended. This high school had no locks on any lockers and in my senior year the total amount of merchandise stolen in that year amounted to \$78. Also every time we had a test the teacher had to leave because we had an honor code because our principal gave us the vision of what it meant to be different and not like all the other public high schools. I just recently attended my 50th high school reunion and the first person who stood up said ‘Remember who you are and where you’re from.’ Our principal would say this to us every day when school began with devotions and when school ended. He also said ‘Do not embarrass yourself or your family or this school and know who you are.’

You are the child of a King. You are loved by the Savior. You are sprinkled clean with His blood. You are clothed with His righteousness. Know who you are in Christ and now you’re ready to do what you do for Christ.

Secondly, is always begin from the end. I recently watched a golf tournament on TV that took place at a course that I have played on and every hole on that course is intimidating. The last two holes in particular are just nightmares. When I have stood on those tees I pray ‘Oh Lord, just help me find my ball when this is done. Lord, please help me not embarrass myself. Lord, please just get me through this.’ There is not a lot of joy because it’s so intimidating. Those professionals who play that course and stand on the first tee are not really on the first tee. In their mind they are on the green. They are going to birdie the hole and to birdie the hole there is a certain place they have to be on that green. That means there is a certain place they have to be on the fairway and now they are ready to hit their tee shot.

You always begin from the end. I am headed to a new heavens and a new earth with a new body to see my Savior, to be with my Savior and now I'm ready to hit the tee shot on Monday morning. Your God secured foundation is past grace. Your God assured destination is future grace that is on the way to you and that sets you up for your God exalting occupation with present grace.

That leads me to the third part which is changed lives for Christ come from Christ-focused minds on the coming Christ. Your first enabling command to be holy, have a changed life is to have your mind fixed on the Christ who is coming for you. Would you pray that God would be gracious now and until Jesus comes back and that this pulpit will lift up Jesus who came to save you and who is coming again for you? There will be sermons on the second coming of Christ just as there is rejoicing on the first advent of Christ. There will be a text every single day that points you to a mind set fully on the hope that is coming for you.

I don't know where you are today and where your hopes are but if they are not upon Christ, the One who is coming for His people, those hopes will be empty and disappoint you. He will never let you go. His love will never let you go. I ask you to have your mind ready in hand, sober and not intoxicated with the world's claims and dreams – yesterday's luxuries, today's necessities. Have your mind and heart fixed on Christ fully for that is what gives the changed life now.

So what on earth will help me be faithful for Christ? It is nothing but there is One who came to earth who is coming again with a new heavens and a new earth. I was reminded of this song recently when Billy Graham went to be with the Lord for it was used at the end of all his crusades. It was the song *Just As I Am* and the first verse says;

*Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

I sung that song so many times growing up and I think now of the thousands who heard that song, having heard the Gospel and came to Christ. There is another verse from that hymn that not many remember but before I give it to you, if you haven't come to Christ from the first verse and its message please contact us at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 because we'd love to pray and talk with you about coming to this Lamb of God – Jesus I come.

For those of you who do know Him as Savior there is another verse at the end of this hymn that says;

*Just as I am, Thy love unknown,
Hath broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

I am Yours alone. I come because You came for me. I come because You're coming again for me. The King is coming and I can hear the trumpet sound. I can hear the voice of the angel. The King is coming, for you and for me, even so come quickly Lord Jesus! It is well with my soul. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for these moments together in Your Word. Holy Spirit please speak to hearts. Today if you have not come to the Lamb of God who came for you, who loves you and gave Himself for you, may I invite you to come to Him today? Savior, for those who do know You,

we want to be faithful and effective here, now and that means we need our minds prepared and focused soberly on Christ and His coming for us. It is well with my soul and because it's well with my soul, here is my life for Christ's sake, Amen.

Power Point

Life Takeaways

- I. Unmistakable Rhythm to Christian Life
- II. Begin from the End
- III. Changed Lives for Christ - Focused Minds on the Coming Christ

A mind fixed on our God-secured salvation and God-assured destination is foundational to our God-given present occupation.

Just as I am! Thy Love Unknown
Has broken every barrier down
Now to be Thine and Thine alone
O Lamb of God I come, I Come!