

## 1 Peter 1:13-25

Today we will continue our study of the first chapter of 1 Peter. As we saw last week, this epistle is full of exhortations. Peter wants us to keep our eyes fixed on Christ, and he calls us to lay aside our sins and seek holiness. The culture around us may seek evil and all manner of depravity, but Christians are called to be different. We are called to be holy – and holiness is *not optional*.

It is high time for Christians to start taking life a little more seriously. It is all too easy to simply join our culture on its march to Hell. There is wickedness everywhere – in fact, it's so prevalent that it just seems normal. Some churches have even stopped teaching about holiness altogether and have instead tried to find ways to fit into the culture. These churches try to be accepted by the world. That, however, is precisely the *wrong* thing to do. We can either be friends with the world or friends with God; if we are friends with the world then we are *the enemy* of God. We have to pick a side. It is time to sober up and realize what is going on:

**1 Peter 1:13:** “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”

The problem we face is that a lot of Christians sleepwalk their way through life. They don't really give much thought to how to honor the Lord with their lives. Sure, they might go to church, and they may even put money in the offering plate. They might volunteer now and then. But for the most part they live their lives as they please. They do whatever they want to do, and aside from the occasional church visit they live exactly like the world. If you were to compare the life of these so-called Christians to the life of the average lost person you really wouldn't be able to find much of a difference. These people have taken Christ and added Him to their lives. They may make time for him occasionally so they can claim to be good Christians, but their main focus is on themselves.

But that is not how God has called us to behave. God is not interested in being a part of our life; He wants to be *all* of our life. He has purchased us with His own blood, and we belong to Him:

**1 Corinthians 6:20:** “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

Do you know what servants do? They serve their masters. They seek to do his will. They work hard to please him. They actively try to advance his interests and do things that are profitable to him. They work for the good of his household. Their focus is on serving the one who is in authority over them.

*That is exactly what God has called us to do.* We must seek to do *His* will, not our own will. We must seek the things that please Him, not the things that please ourselves. We have to learn to have a wholly different outlook on life. Our goal must *not* be to live as we please and try to fit God in around the edges. Instead we should be wholly focused on serving the Lord and advancing His kingdom. How can we be profitable servants? God wants our lives, our actions, and our very thoughts to please Him. God wants to change the things we do, the things we say, and the things we believe. He wants us to abandon our will and seek His will. He wants us to abandon our desires and seek His desires. He wants us to abandon our own way of thinking and learn to think the way that He does. He wants us to cast aside our own opinions and instead see the world from His perspective. He wants to change us into something radically different – a holy people.

It is time for us to take a long and sober look at the way we are living. Do we realize that we are servants of the Most High God? In fact, we are called to be more than just servants. We are called to be a living sacrifice:

**Romans 12:1:** "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

When an animal was given to be a burnt offering, do you know how much of the animal was put toward the sacrifice? *All* of it. The animal didn't make a small donation and then walk away. The *entire animal* was offered. It was complete dedication. That is exactly what God requires of us. He wants control over *all* of our lives. He wants us to wholly dedicate ourselves to Him. He wants all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He wants us to be focused on advancing His kingdom and pursuing His interests. He wants a life that is radically focused on Him. *That* is our "reasonable service" – but that is not the way that many Christians are living today.

It is time we laid aside the sins that so easily beset us:

**1 Peter 1:14:** "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:"

What does God want us to be? *Obedient*. This is not just a recommendation; God *requires* us to obey Him. Many Christians today believe that obedience is not important. They think that since God will forgive them, they can do whatever they want and it doesn't matter. "After all, what is God going to do about it? It's not like He is going to send me to Hell or anything." That sinful attitude comes from the devil. As we saw last week, those who reject the authority of God and continue to sin as they please are not actually saved. All genuine Christians will strive to overcome the sin in their lives and pursue holiness. They will do their best to be obedient, because *holiness matters to them*.

Notice how clearly Peter says that when you become a Christian your life needs to *change*. You can't continue to do the wicked things you used to do. Yes, in the past you did all manner of evil. But you are in Christ now so that evil has to stop. Paul is very clear about this in his letter to the Corinthians:

**1 Corinthians 6:9:** "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,  
10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.  
11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Paul tells the Corinthians that before they were saved they were guilty of all manner of evil. However, that is who they *used* to be. Now that they're saved they have put those sins behind them and are seeking obedience and holiness. They are new creatures in Christ. In fact, they are now *ashamed* of their old lives. They are ashamed of all the evil things that they have done in the past, and they seek to honor God with their lives.

The problem is that many people want to go to Heaven but they don't want to stop sinning. They

want eternal life but they don't want God to tell them what to do. They want salvation but they also want to remain thieves and adulterers and sexually immoral. They demand the right to keep being the same wicked person they used to be. Do you know what the Bible says about that? It says that those people *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. Those people will never set foot in Heaven. All those who come to Jesus for salvation but who refuse to repent of their sins will *not* be saved. Repentance is required.

I realize that in this life we will never gain complete victory over sin. I realize that sin and temptation will continue to trouble us. But all genuine Christians will fight the sin in their life. Their sin grieves them and they seek holiness. Peter is quite clear that this is a requirement:

**1 Peter 1:15:** “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

Holiness is *not* optional. Obedience is not optional. It is true that we are not saved by our works; we are saved by grace. But genuine salvation will always result in good works. It will always result in obedience and holiness. If there is no obedience and no desire for holiness, then there is no salvation either:

**1 John 1:6:** “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

If we reject holiness and obedience and continue to walk in evil then *we do not know the Lord*. We might claim to know Him, but we are lying. God is holy, and those who are His disciples must be holy as well.

There are some people who imagine that being a Christian means that life has no consequences. You can do as you please and live as you please, and in the end it won't make any difference. After all, God will forgive you, and when you die you're going to go to Heaven. What difference does it make? If you spend your whole Christian life doing absolutely nothing for God then it's not going to matter.

That is precisely the attitude that Peter addresses. He reminds people that the Lord will hold them accountable:

**1 Peter 1:17:** “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”

Peter tells us that God will hold us accountable for the way we have lived our lives. We will stand before God and be judged for the things that we have done. Even though we are Christians and even though we have been forgiven, God will still judge our works. In fact, this judgment is so significant that Peter tells us to literally *be afraid*. We ought to fear God because He is going to judge us impartially. There will be no respect of persons in that judgment.

Every one of us will be required to stand before the judgment seat of Christ:

**2 Corinthians 5:10:** “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath

done, whether it be good or bad.”

We are the servants of God, and God will hold His servants accountable for the way they have lived their life. Peter tells us that this should actually fill us with *fear*. There is a judgment coming and we are *not* exempt from it. There is a day approaching when God will examine the way we have spent our life and will judge us for what we have done. Have we been faithful servants or have we been wicked? Did we use our time wisely or poorly? Did we advance God's kingdom or did we seek our own?

What will God have to say to us when that day comes? Will He call us good and faithful servants, or will He have a very different message for us? Yes, it's true that our sins have been forgiven, but *we will still be held accountable*. Our actions matter and there are real consequences.

If we are doing good then we should continue to do good and not lose heart:

**Galatians 6:9:** “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

However, if we are doing evil then we need to change our life. We need to pursue holiness. Since we are still alive there is time to change. There is time to seek after the Lord and live a life that pleases Him. We can still be profitable servants.

Peter commands us to remember the enormous price Christ paid in order to purchase our salvation:

**1 Peter 1:18:** “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”

Sin is *not* a game. It is not something that doesn't really matter. The world may not take sin very seriously; in fact, the culture may laugh at the very concept. But God takes sin *extremely* seriously. Sin is so evil that it results in death. It is so wicked that all those whose sins are not forgiven will face the wrath of God for all of eternity:

**Matthew 25:46:** “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

There are some people who claim that the wrath of God is not everlasting. They say that God will punish people for a time but will eventually let everyone into Heaven. That, however, is *not* what Jesus said. Jesus said that there are two things that will last for all of eternity: the everlasting life of the saints, and the everlasting punishment of the wicked. Sin is so bad – so terrible – that it has to be punished *forever*. That is how serious it really is.

The Puritans had a saying about this:

Let me never forget that I have an eternal duty to love, honor, and obey thee,  
that thou art infinitely worthy of such;  
that if I fail to glorify thee I am guilty of infinite evil that merits infinite punishment,

for sin is the violation of an infinite obligation.

God sees sin for what it truly is, and He paid a very high price to deliver us from sin. We were not bought with silver and gold; instead our salvation was purchased by the blood of Christ. He shed His own blood so that we might be forgiven. He was tortured to death so that we might be saved from the wrath of God. He offered Himself as a living sacrifice. God paid a very high price to save us from sin. We *cannot* continue to walk in sin as we once did. We must repent and seek the things of God.

In the next verse Peter gives us an amazing truth. God planned our salvation from the very beginning:

**1 Peter 1:20:** “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,”

Here we get into some very deep waters. What Peter is saying is that the sin of Adam and Eve did not catch God by surprise. Before God created the world He knew what was going to happen. He knew that the Fall would take place and that man would choose sin over God. He knew that in order to be saved Christ would have to take on the form of a man and die in our place. He knew how things would turn out and He knew what the price of our salvation would be. God knew all of these things before He created the world – and so before God created the world He decided to save us:

**2 Timothy 1:9:** “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”

**Titus 1:2:** “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began,”

God knew our need *before we even had a need*, and He moved to save us *before we even needed saving*. God had the plan of salvation in place before the race of men even existed.

But this raises a question, doesn't it? Since God saw what was going to happen and knew that mankind would fall into sin, why did He create mankind in the first place? Why not create a different race that would not fall into sin? For that matter, why did God create anything? Look at how deeply Christ had to suffer on the cross in order to save us! Why would God do that?

Some claim that it is because we were worth it. They say that we were so valuable and so important that we deserved to be saved. That is a blasphemous lie. The idea that wicked men are more valuable than the infinite, holy God is utterly blasphemous. We did *not* deserve to be saved. We are most certainly *not* more valuable than God. The cross is not a testimony to how great men are; it is a testimony to how much God loves us. God did not love us because we deserved it; instead He chose to love us *in spite* of the fact that we did not deserve it in the least. We were most definitely not worth saving, and yet God chose to save us anyway.

So why did God create the world? It's not because He was lonely, for God has no needs. We find the answer in Romans 9. The Lord created the world for His glory:

**Romans 9:22:** “What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:  
23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy,

which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

Before God created the world He had many attributes that could not be revealed. For example, it was impossible for God to demonstrate His mercy because no one had ever sinned. It was impossible for God to show His justice because no one had ever broken His commands. It was impossible for Him to demonstrate forgiveness, wrath, or compassion. God had all of those qualities but they were hidden for all of eternity.

Romans 9 tells us that God created the world in order to glorify Himself. He did it so that He might reveal who He really was. God is glorified by both the righteous and the wicked. The righteous allow God to demonstrate His forgiveness, His grace, His compassion, and His mercy. The wicked allow God to demonstrate His justice, His wrath, and His impartiality. The wicked may not want to glorify God and they may hate God, and yet God still uses them to reveal aspects of His character that were hidden until the creation of the world. God uses the righteous to bring glory to His name, and He also uses the wicked to bring glory to His name.

God does not exist to serve us; instead we exist to serve God. We were created to bring glory and honor to Him. The message of salvation is the greatest story that has ever been told:

**1 Peter 1:21:** “Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

Who raised Jesus from the dead? God did. Who gave Jesus His glorified, resurrected form and set him at the right hand of God? God did. Because of these things we have every reason to have faith and hope. After all, we believe that God can raise men from the dead *because we have seen Him do it*. Since God raised Christ from the dead, we have an excellent reason to believe that God will raise us up from the dead as well. After all, God has made us a promise and God always keeps His promises. We know what is coming because we know that God is faithful.

In our day the word “faith” is widely misunderstood. When people today say “have faith” what they usually mean is “believe in something even though there's no good reason to believe”. They speak of “blind faith”. But that is *not* what faith means! Faith is a synonym of *trust*. God wants us to trust Him – but our trust is not blind. God has given us many reasons to trust Him. We have His Word, which testifies of Him. We have the eyewitness accounts of the apostles, who tell us of the many miracles they saw – and of the resurrection of Christ. We could spend hours studying all the ways God has given us good, solid reasons to trust in Him. Our faith in God is not blind; instead it is rooted in all the things that God has done. We are not trusting someone we do not know. In fact, our faith is extremely reasonable. We believe in God *because* of the things that He has done.

So what should be our response to all of this? Since God has done so much for us, we ought to pursue holiness and obedience. But Peter does not stop there. He has another exhortation for us:

**1 Peter 1:22:** “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:”

Peter commands us to love one another. He is not the only one to give us this command; in fact, we find it all throughout the Scripture. Jesus said the same thing:

**Matthew 22:39:** “And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as

thyselves.”

But Jesus went even further than that. He said that the world would recognize our faith by the way that we love one another:

**John 13:35:** “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

This raises a question, doesn't it? Are our churches truly characterized by love? Is it obvious to the world that Christians love one another, or are we too busy fighting? Love is not always an easy thing to do; after all, Christians still struggle with sin and we often do things that we shouldn't. It is very easy to start arguments, cause problems, and create trouble. Churches divide all the time. It is very natural – but it isn't right. God has called us to a higher standard. He has called us to choose love, even when love isn't easy.

There is one final topic that Peter raises at the end of this chapter. That topic is the Word of God:

**1 Peter 1:23:** “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

Peter draws a sharp contrast between the glory of men and the glory of the Scriptures. Men live short lives and then die; their beauty, majesty, and glory do not last for very long. They may think that they are truly somebody, but death will come for them. They cannot endure throughout the ages. Their time is limited and their end is certain.

The Scriptures, however, are different. The Word of God is not temporary; it is eternal. It will abide forever. Throughout all the ages of time it will always exist:

**Matthew 24:35:** “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

The Bible is a powerful book. Not only is it eternal but it is sharp as well, able to uncover our very motives:

**Hebrews 4:12:** “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The Scriptures are able to make us wise:

**2 Timothy 3:15:** “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

All of the Scriptures are given by the inspiration of God, and every verse in the Bible is profitable:

**2 Timothy 3:16:** "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

As you can see, the Bible is a mighty book! Every word and verse that it contains is flawless and is profitable for our instruction. The Scriptures are powerful enough to uncover our true motives, and able to make us wise unto salvation. It is an eternal book that will always be relevant and which will never pass away. It is a book that we ought to study diligently and that we should hold in high regard.

In this book God has given us the plan of salvation. He has given us prophecies regarding things that have not yet taken place. He has told us about His Son. He has revealed His laws, His character, and His dealings in history. The Bible is the only source of divine revelation that exists. It contains all the truth that we need in order to be perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It is a tremendous treasure.

Yet in our day there are many who hold the Bible in low esteem. Some say that only parts of the Bible are inspired and the rest is of no value. Others disagree with the teachings of the Bible and claim that they are a reflection of their times, and things are different now. Many people can't be bothered to read the Bible at all. But God has made the truth plain: every word of God is flawless. Every word is inspired and is of tremendous value to us. The Bible is not a reflection of its times; it is instead a reflection of the person, will, and character of God. The Bible absolutely true, and God has commanded us to believe what it says and obey its commands.