

As we have learned in our study of 1st Peter, Peter has told his readers and us some very important and foundational truths about our Christian faith. Again, remember, that he is writing to those who had to flee their homes because of their faith in Christ. He calls “*the pilgrims of the dispersion.*”

In doing so, he reminds them (and us) that we are just passing through this world on our way to heaven. He reminds his readers that they had been elected according to the foreknowledge of God, and that the whole Trinity was active in their salvation.

As he continues to encourage them in their faith he tells them what God has waiting for them – that they have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and place reserved in heaven for them – a place that is perfect – a place that is guarded by God Himself.

This place reserved in heaven is guaranteed for them, despite the trials and tribulations that they might be going through – because these trials and tribulations are a test to see whether their faith is genuine – with the bottom line, the salvation of their souls.

And then last week we saw that this salvation was the result of the Old Testament prophecies that had been fulfilled. Remember, that the prophets did not see things completely – they only saw shadows of things to come. Those 1st century Christians saw more than the ancient prophets did ... and we see more than those ancient prophets did – because we have seen the fulfillment of the prophecies in the life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Peter has told them all this, and as he goes on, he tells them what they are to do because of all that God has done for them. Turn with me to 1 Peter 1:13-16 (READ).

As a result of all that God has done for them, Peter gives them some very specific instructions as to what they are to do – in spite of the trials, tribulations and persecutions that they might be going through.

Notice that he says – *therefore* – meaning, that as a result of all that I have said, this is what you are to do – and he tells them five things that they are to do in obedience to all that God has done for them.

First he tells them – 1:13: “*Therefore gird up the loins of your mind ...*” In other words, get your minds ready for action. The picture here before is that of someone getting ready for battle. In those days they wore long flowing robes, and when they went into battle, they would gather them up and tuck them so they could fight effectively.

So they needed to have their minds ready for action – they needed to remember what God had done for them, and they needed to be obedient to what God had required of them, because the Christian life is a battle ... it is spiritual warfare ... it is those in the light of the gospel against those in darkness.

As such Peter goes on – “*be sober*” – while at its root meaning, it means to abstain from wine, the fuller meaning is to not do anything to excess, and be always on the look-out. The idea is one who has sound mind – again, in other words, remember what God has done for you. In other words, be self-controlled from within and don’t be controlled by your passions – and again, remember that you are at war.

As he continues he tells them again, to continue to look for the return of Christ – and to trust in that – *“and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”* Four times already, he has referred to the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:5: *“who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* ... 1:7 *“that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,”* ... 1:9 *“receiving the end of your faith; the salvation of your souls.”* And now here in verse 13.

The return of Christ is that blessed hope that the Christian is looking for – because when he returns it will be in triumph and glory – not as the suffering servant of his first coming. So Peter says, remember this.

But, he also reminds them that while they are still living in this world they are to act in a certain way – *“as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;”* Before they became Christians they acted in one way – because they didn’t know any better – they were ignorant of the law of God and His standards.

But now, as Christians, to whom the way of Christ has been revealed, as God’s children they now need to be obedient to the Word of God.

With the concluding words *“but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”*

In other words their conduct was to reflect who they now belonged to – the Lord Jesus Christ.

What do these exhortations mean for us? Quite simply, the Christian life is not an easy life. Those that portray it as such really don’t know what they are talking about, or they are outright liars.

The Christian life is difficult. There is opposition from the world – and that opposition is strong. Jesus said in John 15:18-19: *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”*

I get World Magazine – it is a news magazine, similar to Time or U.S. News and World Report, but from a Christian perspective. They continually have articles about the persecution of Christians in different parts of the world – torture, arrest, and even death. And yes, it is still happening in the 21st Century.

And there are also the articles about what is happening here in this country – with people saying you can’t mention God in school ... and some would outlaw the Pledge of Allegiance because it mentions God ... persecuting the Boy Scouts because of their standards and their oath to God ... and there are other examples. But, the bottom line is that there will always be opposition from the world.

And then there is Satan himself. Towards the ends of this very letter Peter says in a similar exhortation – 1 Peter 5:8 *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* It can’t be much clearer than this.

That is also why the Apostle Paul tell us to put in the armor of God. We read in Ephesians 6:10-13: *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”*

But if we remember what God has done for us through the Lord Jesus Christ – chosen us before the foundation of the world ... having a place reserved in heaven for us ... the salvation of our souls and all the other blessings that God has given us, then whatever comes our way we can overcome — especially if we following the instructions that God has given us in his word: 1 Peter 1:13-16: *“ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy.”*