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Becoming What We Are Called To Be

1 PETER 1:13-16

Introduction

1. The majority of us here in this room today wear the name of Christ and profess to be Christians.
2. To say that we are Christians is to say that we are living **changed lives**.

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3. We often sing the hymn “**Just As I Am**,” which contains these words,

**Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!**

**Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!**

4. All of us who came, did so with the understanding that we would never be the same again.
 - a. We came as those who were unclean, but Jesus made us pure by the power of His blood.
 - b. We came as slaves of sin, but He paid our ransom and set us free.
 - c. Where once we resisted God and rebelled against His will, our stubborn will has now yielded to Him, and we obey His commandments.
 - d. Though we once despised righteousness, we now love the ways of God.
5. Peter uses a word to describe those of us who have undergone such a transformation — we are **saints** called by God to be **holy**.

- a. It marks us as those who are in a special relationship with God.
 - b. We are different, set apart from the world.
 - c. Our lives are characterized by holiness.
6. In our text today, Peter begins with the word “Therefore” (“Wherefore,” KJV).
 7. He looks back over the last ten verses at all the great benefits of salvation which we have received — new birth, living hope (v. 3), an assured inheritance (v. 4), God’s protective power and “a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (v. 5).
 8. With these things in mind, He examines the holy lives which God calls us to live and answers two questions:
 - a. Why should we be holy?
 - b. How do we live holy lives?
 9. This morning, I ask you to follow along with me as we look at what God has to say to us through His servant Peter.

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I. Why Should We Be Holy?

“but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.””

(1 Peter 1:14–16, NASB95)

A. GOD COMMANDS IT

“. . . but like the Holy One Who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behavior” (1 Peter 1:15, NASB95).

1. God has always required those whom He calls His own to be holy.
2. Three months after Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, they arrived at Mount Sinai.
3. God summoned Moses up on the mountain where He met with him.
4. One of the first things which God instructed Moses to tell the people is

recorded for us in Exodus 19:6.

“. . . you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6a, NASB95).

5. Later, as God gave them His law, He reiterated this truth again and again (Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7).

“For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.” (Leviticus 11:44a, NASB95)

“For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.” (Leviticus 11:45, NASB95)

“Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.’” (Leviticus 19:2, NASB95)

“You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 20:7, NASB95)

7. Peter quotes these commands and applies them to us as Christians “be holy yourselves in all your behavior” (v. 15).
8. To do anything else is to be disobedient.

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B. GOD IS HOLY

“because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy”” (1 Peter 1:16, NASB95).

1. The holiness of God is emphasized again and again in Scripture.
2. Each time God commanded the Israelites to be holy, He gave them the reason, “I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7).
3. Forty-five times in the Old Testament, God is referred to as the “Holy One.”
4. The prophet Isaiah had a vision of God in the temple. The angels about Him (Seraphim) were calling out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3).

5. In Revelation 4, the apostle John has a vision of God seated upon His heavenly throne, with four living creatures around the throne who continually declare, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come” (Revelation 4:8).
7. In Hebrews 12:14, we are told that “without holiness no one will see the Lord” (NIV84).

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II. How Do We Live Holy Lives?

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,” (1 Peter 1:13-14, NASB95).

A. WE MAKE A BREAK WITH OUR PAST LIFESTYLE

“... do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in ignorance” (1 Peter 1:14b, NASB95).

1. The only other time we find the word “conformed” in the New Testament is in Romans 12:2, where Paul wrote, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2, NASB95)
2. J. B. Phillips paraphrases this passage with these words, “Don’t let the world around squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within ...” (Romans 12:2, J.B. Phillips New Testament).
3. Prior to our life in Christ, much of our life focused on fulfilling our own selfish desires, which Peter calls “lusts.”
4. These sinful desires led us down paths which were in direct disobedience to

God and His will.

5. The apostle John spoke of the seductive influence of the world when he wrote, “Do not love the world or the things in the world” (1 John 2:15, ESV), and described those things as “the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16, ESV).
6. In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul listed “the deeds of the flesh” with terms like “sexual immorality, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, divisions, envy, drunkenness,” just to mention a few.
7. Here, in 1 Peter 4:3, Peter told the Christians in Asia Minor, “the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries” (1 Peter 4:3, NASB95).
8. Here, in v. 14, Peter says that we did all of this out of “ignorance” — we didn’t know any better.
9. Now, however, because we know better, if we seek to live holy lives before God, we must discard our old sinful ways.

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B. WE NOW LIVE LIVES CHARACTERIZED BY OBEDIENCE

“As obedient children . . . be holy yourselves in all your behavior” (1 Peter 1:14a,15b, NASB95).

1. This new life is one which is lived in obedience to God.
2. As a matter of fact, Peter describes us as “obedient children” and tells us to “be holy . . . in all [our] behavior.”
3. We don’t just obey God when it is convenient or when it suits our desires.
4. Holiness is the choice we make to march to the beat of a different drum.
5. Down in chapter 2 of this letter, verses 11-12, Peter wrote, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war

against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:11–12, NASB95)

- a. Being holy in all our behavior means that we “abstain from the sinful desires which war against [our] souls” (NIV84).
 - b. It means that we “keep [our] behavior excellent” (we “live such good lives” NIV84) among those who aren’t Christians that even though they may speak against us now and accuse us of doing wrong, when God returns, they can’t help but glorify Him.
6. Paul put it another way in Colossians 3:7, where he wrote, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks through Him to God the Father” (Colossians 3:7).
 7. Are you living a life of obedience to God?

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C. WE PREPARE OUR MINDS FOR ACTION

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action . . .” (1 Peter 1:13a).

1. Literally, this says, “gird up the loins of your mind” (NKJV).
2. The image which Peter paints here is drawn from the culture of his day.
3. In that day and time, the ordinary person wore a long, sleeveless shirt of linen or wool which reached down to the knees or ankles.
4. Whenever a person needed to engage in some physical action such as running, working or fighting in a battle, they would pull this shirt up and tuck it into a belt so that he or she could move about freely without hindrance.
 - a. When the Israelites ate of the Passover Meal on the night before they left Egypt, this is the way they were to be dressed (Exodus 12:11).

- b. Elijah “girded up his loins” following his prayer for rain and outran Ahab’s chariot to Jezreel (1 Kings 18:46).
5. What Peter is telling us is that our holiness begins with our minds.
6. In Proverbs 23:7, Solomon wrote, “As a man thinks within himself, so he is.”
7. If we are going to live holy lives we need to guard our minds and the things we allow in them.
8. Psalm 1 tells us that the blessed man meditates on God’s law “day and night” (Psalm 1:2).
9. Later in this letter, 1 Peter 3:15, Peter writes that you and I should “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (NIV84).
10. Can you tell someone, using the Scriptures, why you are a Christian?
11. Can you explain to them where your hope comes from?

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D. WE REMAIN SPIRITUALLY ALERT

“... keep sober in spirit ...” (1 Peter 1:13b).

1. Literally, this means “don’t be drunk.”
2. Peter gives it a spiritual application.
3. He is telling us that if we are going to live holy lives, we must keep a clear head, we must be alert and self-controlled.
4. Why is this so important?
5. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 5:8 where he uses this word again: “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
6. You and I live in the enemy’s territory. He is just waiting for us to let our guard down.
7. It is vital that we remain vigilant in our Christian walk.

Slide 8**E. WE FOCUS OUR HOPE ON THE GRACE TO COME**

“. . . fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13c, NASB95).

1. Our hope has to do with our affections, our desires.
2. If I were to ask you right now, “What is the focus of your affections? What do you desire most in life at this moment? What would your answer be?”

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3. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke about where we “fix [our] hope.”

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19–21, NASB95)

4. A little bit later in this sermon, Jesus added these words, “But seek first His [God’s] kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33, NASB95).
5. Peter tells us what our hope should be focused upon — it is the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
6. This word “grace” sums up all that we are to set our hope upon:
 - a. “a living hope” (v. 3)
 - b. “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” (v. 4, ESV).
 - c. “a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (v. 5).
 - d. “the salvation of [our] souls” (v. 9).
7. Why does Peter use the word “grace” ? Why not another word like inheritance, or salvation, or blessing?

8. It is because for those of us who are Christians, grace is the sum total of all the blessings of God.
9. Every single blessing which we receive is the result of God's grace — none of them are earned or deserved.
10. This is why God's grace is so amazing.

Conclusion

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1. In the upper room, on the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2b-3, NASB95).
2. I have heard it said many times, "heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people."
3. Are you preparing to go to heaven?
4. Peter has told us today what is required — a holy life.
5. As I shared with you near the beginning of this lesson. Hebrews 12:14 tells us that "without holiness no one will see the Lord" (NIV84).
6. Would God consider you to be holy? If not, you can change that this morning.
7. Will you come?