

*10As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.*

*13Therefore, 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. 14As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”*

Last week we talked about our Great Salvation. God foreknew us before the foundation of the world, and He predestined us to become conformed to His image.

We are sanctified, set apart from this fallen sinful world by the Holy Spirit and we are made alive together with Christ. We are born again, regenerated, and our sins are removed and forgotten by the power of Jesus blood at the cross.

We are placed into the body of Christ by His Holy Spirit who also indwells us and is our down payment promise of future glories. We are waiting for a Saviour who will transport us to His heaven and we will be revealed with Him, in Glory, at His coming to take back this earth from all rulers and authorities under Satan who have usurped the rule here.

In all the created realms there is no one who is richer and more glorious than us except our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in fact the church is on display, God is showing us off to the very rulers and authorities that are doomed when Christ returns.

We are the hottest commodity in all creation. God did that, for His glory.

And Peter begins his letter to a group of persecuted, beleaguered beat

down worn out christians, who are blamed for all of Rome's problems, who are hated by this world, by telling them, there's no one in all the creation who is richer than you are.

It's quite a contrast! Listen to Hebrews chapter 10 to get an idea of the current status of these believers. This is a perfect parallel with these saints that Peter writes to.

*Heb. 10:32 - 36 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.*

You were saved. You suffered. You were made a public spectacle. You were reproached. You lost your property. Some of you went to prison for your faith. Others of you visited the ones in prison, knowing full well that the sympathy shown to those in prison would brand you and set you up to go to prison yourselves. You did it anyways. Why? *34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, **knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.***

We'll take whatever this world can throw at us in this life, why? Because we have a better possession. We own Christ. He owns us. And we have a salvation that is protected, guarded for us, in heaven. We possess a sure inheritance.

Peter begins with a description of great salvation. Here's how rich you are in Christ, and in verse 13, he finally says; Therefore. This is who you are. Therefore, this is how you act. In view of the unfathomable riches, it's not too much to expect you to act like . . . who you are!

*13Therefore, 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.*

The language here is foreign to our experience. The translators have changed the wording because the original, without someone taking the time to set the scene for you, is not going to make a connection in your understanding.

The literal translation goes something like; *Therefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober minded, fully set your hope upon the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

There is a word in there that gives the description of the christian mindset that is only used this one time in all of scripture. anazónnumi (an-ad-zone'-noo-mee) and it's a word that describes what you need to do with your tunic, if you're going into a situation where dignity and slow movement is not going to get the job done.

You can't run in a tunic. You trip over it. You can't do hard physical work in a tunic. It doesn't work for plowing a field. It's extra bulk that causes you to not be able to do stuff.

So they would hike the thing up and tie it up out of the way with a belt, so that they could get serious about the job at hand. Peter says, you need to do with your minds what you do with your tunic for your feet. Get your mind ready for work. For conflict. For serious stressful effort. Get rid of what slows you down.

But Peter almost describes a military situation here. We watch Blue Bloods, or Hawaii Five 0, and inevitably you get to the scene where they have to kick in the doors and confront the bad guys, right?

So the scene leading up to that is where they're all putting on their bullet proof vests because they know what's coming. Then in the action scene, they kick in the door and dart from position to position always with the gun facing forward, ready to shoot.

That military battle mindset is what Peter is trying to set up for us by the words he has chosen. You don't go into battle with your tunic in

dignified mode and your mind thinking about where you'll go for vacation this year, or what the weather will be like for barbequing tonight.

If you're in a battle your mind has to be sharp. You've got one job. Stay alive, and to do that you need to get sharp. Total focus. The bad guys are in here and they've got guns. Now is not the time to think about a mud facial and a massage. Or switching around your retirement portfolio.

Satan tried several different strategies in order to decimate the church. We're in the first of those, here in Peter's epistle. Satan as adversary. Satan and his armies are the bad guys. They're out to kill christians. Persecution. Rejection. Satan was going to crush the church, but the church through the more powerful Christ met the adversary and thrived anyways.

Then he shifts strategy. Everybody is the church. No cost christianity, but the new strategy was to muddy up doctrine until it effectively could not save anybody. Catholic Church. Holy Roman empire. Dark ages. The few real christians were being killed by . . . the christians. It was the pope against protestants.

Then God played dirty and released the word of God in the common language of the people. Read it yourself. And the missionary era began. Protestants taking the word of God all over the globe.

But then Satan thrust the most diabolical of all of his schemes upon the church. Wealth. Ease. Complacency. Slumber.

It's like Satan finally got smart and read Peter's letter and said, I know what will work. If I can take everything Peter said in these verses and make it so unnecessary that people will forget this is even here.

These words of Peter are like a foreign language to us. And I'm preaching to myself. Sadly, I'm as bad or worse about this as anybody. I should be going door to door speaking to my neighbors about eternity, and instead I'm like, how can I juggle my time so I can work on Tina's

'65 Ranchero.

I can teach you what the words mean, but I have a sense of hopelessness that anyone is going to understand this and actually do anything.

Gird up the loins of your mind for action in the battle against Satan?  
Right Peter, we'll get right on that. Hmmmm, let me check the weather web page and see if I can barbeque tonight. Oooo. It's gonna be pretty windy and the barbeque doesn't do well in the wind. Maybe we better just eat out.

Peter says, if you're going to survive this battle, you will need to gather up the stuff that gets in the way and makes you stumble. Tie it up in a belt so you can run. And you will need to get your focus sharp. The bad guys have guns and they're just across the warehouse behind some barrels, waiting to take you out.

Years back, in a small group meeting, (this is one of the things Gary Flood reminds me of from time to time,) we were studying one of these action verses that the modern church ignores and I said matter of factly, "Are we going to **DO** this". Awkward silence. chirp chirp chirping of a cricket, and people have got that look in their faces like; "oh boy. We've got one of those guys."

That was 8 or 9 years ago. Apparently the answer is, no. Let's do a pie chart. I don't know what your pie chart looks like so all I can do is sort of be honest about mine. Sleep. 33% Work for an employer. 40% Work to keep the house livable and Pam doesn't murder me. 22% Watch TV and sit on my butt. 19% Play with my hobbies. 15% Concentrate on anything meaningful of eternal consequences. <5%. Will I survive in that building with the bad guys that want to kill me? Do your own pie chart. See what you come up with.

You know, looking back on making my choice to teach through this book, if I had thought about these verses ahead of time I might have passed over Peter and gone on to something less challenging. Too late now. Peter is like a bludgeoning club to the modern church.

And then he says; *fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Lets do a pie chart on what we've fixed our hope on. OK, maybe not.

In Peter's world situation, all hope was lost for the current world. They were the dregs of society. No dignity. Lost their property. Some were going to prison. Some were being exterminated. And Peter says, don't waste any time thinking about somehow making this place habitable.

We ignore this too. Think about the last election. How much time and energy christians put into thinking and hoping for what. Well, we're gonna elect a person that's going to make everything better for us now.

We talked about it non stop for 6 or 9 months. It just proves the fact that the church is invested in this world. We're working for NOW. We want a stable economy and a security so that we can ultimately retire and get rid of that 40% working for an employer and just coast.

It isn't sin to have a retirement account. It's OK. God expects us to act wisely. But ask yourself this question. If the retirement account evaporated, if the economy collapsed utterly so that all the retirement accounts, all the numbers safely in some computer database were meaningless . . . would you come out the other side . . . a christian?

Peter says to *fix your hope* . . . How much of it? *Completely*. Fix all of your hope in a different world than this one.

Peter says it's important to put your anchor of stability, your hopes, your dreams, in another world. This one can't be trusted. This world is unstable. Therefore, **gird yourself for battle in this world** and **fix your hope on a different world**. A future one. In heaven. More on that in a minute.

Think about Job for a moment. He's a rich guy. A very wealthy guy. He owns land. He has phenomenal flocks. He has a large family of adult children. He's got it made in this world. He's got everything. He's a rock star. Honor. Respect. Authority. Riches. Land. Flocks. A

family dynasty. He has it all.

Then one day someone steals the flocks, all his worldly stuff, gone. Then an earthquake and a wind storm knocks the house down that his children are in and crushes every one. No survivors. Family dynasty; gone.

Job says, *the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.* Then his health is removed. He's sitting in a pile of ashes with boils covering his body. Dignity gone. Position gone. Authority gone.

How did Job survive that? He didn't sin. Listen to Job's words. Job 19:25 - 27 *"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; 27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!...*

Sounds like old Job had been talking to Enoch doesn't it.

Job lost everything. Everything but his wife. There may be a hint in that. Everything's gone and Job says; I'm going to see God. The hope is so exciting, my heart faints at the thought of it.

Sitting in a pile of ashes covered in boils, his wife telling him to *curse God and die*, and Job says, my hope is fixed in another time and place, and it's so wonderful, my heart can hardly stand to think about it.

Peter says to gird your mind for war. Fix your hope on another world. We woke up this morning and everything Peter warns us about . . . seems irrelevant. Our world is secure. This morning it's secure. Our investments are stable. We look forward to a long satisfying retirement with many visits by our children and our grandchildren. Job woke up one morning and all of that disappeared before his eyes.

Beloved, this world is unstable. If it can happen to Job, why do we complacently think, it can't happen to us?? That's non sensical. We've been warned.

Last week the two high school buddies that some of you met and welcomed warmly last Sunday, and myself climbed into a Model A woodie station wagon and headed towards Ely. Ultimately with one breakdown, we covered 565 miles, some of it in adverse conditions. Cold. Sleet. Hail. Rain.

Rich is already 65 this January. Glen will be next month. And I will be in August. Rich has MS and moves fairly cautiously and can lose his balance. Glen has a pulled groin muscle and is recovering from a broken arm. He has trouble swinging his feet into the back seat. I'm being slowed down by arthritis. My wrist is weak.

Even in the best of circumstances, this life simply wears out. We had a glorious time, one for the memory books but we looked at each other and said we probably won't be making the same trip in 10 more years. Maybe 5.

What a wisdom Peter gives us. Fix our hope, not on fun relaxing trips, a secure and comfortable retirement, but rather; *fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*

God is gracious to His children. He gives us good things to enjoy. But ultimately, this world, even in the best of times, fades away. It is diminishing. We christians have a hope that transcends anything this world can give to us, or take away from us.

That hope is based in the second coming of Jesus Christ, to this world, in all of His glory, as He reveals to this world, His saints, with Him in glory.

We keep returning to the word revelation. A revealing. We will be revealed. With Him. In glory. That is when the ultimate grace of our salvation is completed. This world that hated and mis-treated you will watch in horror as you are revealed, with Christ, coming in glory, for it's judgement.

To the first christians, you can read between the lines that there was a



real sense that we have lost, that this second coming of Christ, for His saints, was going to happen in their life times.

Let go of your attachments to this world, because we're going to the next one. Soon! So much so that the saints in Thessalonica were concerned about some of their number who had died. What about them? Did they miss it? And Paul explains the doctrine of the rapture to them. No, the dead in Christ will rise first. We'll meet them, in the air.

The church today talks very little about a war mentality, a battle mentality, a sharpness of focus on doing battle with our adversary in this world, and a mindset that has put all of it's hope on the next world. Those ideas are foreign to us in 2017. We've lost the sense of imminency. We could meet Jesus in the air. Today. This hour. Forget about your 401K.

Jesus is coming. We've got a wedding to attend. We have fine linen, white and clean to put on for the wedding. We are the bride of Christ. And together with Him, we will be revealed to a terrified wicked world.

*14As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."*

The logic of Peter's argument is this. If you've fixed your hope on a revelation, a revealing of the church, on white horses, charging out of heaven with Jesus, the Christ, clothed in white linen garments, a holy people coming with Christ in Holy judgement, citizens of another world, coming in judgement with Christ on this rebellious one . . .

Start living in that reality . . NOW. Start acting like your future self, now. In this life.

Peter says; *14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,*

Every man, woman, and child in this world is living with the scars of the

Adamic fall. We are born of sinful parents and all of us, because of the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, are born, broken.

We have lusts that are subversive to a Holy God. We are altogether, unholy in the lostness of this world. And until we look into this mirror, the Bible, which shows us a Holy God, we are ignorant. Conformed to lusts in ignorance.

Consider the world around you. Then consider the one book that is a mirror into the wickedness of rebellious mankind. Then consider the manifold effort of this world to bury this book and this book's Holy God, in oblivion.

Born in sin. Sinful broken lusts and desires. One book with One God describes Holiness and sinfulness. Men love their sin. They hate that God. They have worked, in my lifetime I might add, to obliterate *that* book and *that* God.

And the church, seeking to retain some sense of acceptance in a hostile world, has blurred those black and white lines.

It's rare to hear a sermon on holiness. Or to find a people who take these issues seriously.

I'm in my seventh decade and in my lifetime, the church, collectively, looked the other way and did not say much about; divorce. birth control. the sexual revolution. the breakdown of marriage and the family. the ultimate collapse of any moral standards, and ultimately, the rise and wholesale acceptance of deviant sexual lifestyles.

There are only a couple of walls left to break down. Sex with children and animals. Those seem shocking and onerous to us today, but I'm here to tell you that in my lifetime, speaking of homosexuality was shocking and onerous. Now it's declared off limits to speak of it as sinful.

Peter makes something clear. Those lusts of a broken, fallen, world are real. And we once walked in them. But we were ignorant. And Peter

says, if you've come out of this world, if you've been born again into a new life that transcends this world, you need to leave the lusts of this world, in this world.

We who are no longer ignorant, need to live like who we will be in the next world. What is his argument for that kind of living?

*15but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."*

Did Peter write Hebrews? Because I keep finding Peterine snippets in Hebrews. Hebrews 12:14 says; *14 Pursue peace with all men, as well as holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.*

The writer of Hebrews warns, no one will see the Lord, who is not holy. A caution that should wake the current evangelical church from slumber. Pursue holiness because no one will see the Lord who is not Holy.

The modern church has bought into the modern belief that what Peter calls lusts of a former life, held in ignorance, is actually, OK, because it's just natural. We buy into the lies. Homosexuality is somehow genetic. Science claims to prove that it's a natural phenomenon that can't be fought or changed. And so is every other deviance from the standards of this book.

And the pope and the evangelical church and it looks like perhaps even the mormons are saying, sheesh, we can't fight science.

And Peter comes along and says, those lusts, while real, were yours in ignorance, and you have come out of that fallen world into a Holy one, and the writer of Hebrews says, you won't see God, at least not in a happy way, if you jettison the holiness that this book defines. Black and white people.

I watched a show on PBS narrated by Martin Clunes, who I love, Doc Martin, and it was about twins. Identical twins, genetically identical

from one cell that split. And they spent not a few minutes investigating a set of identical twins where one lived a normal life and the other deviated first into homosexuality and ultimately gender re-assignment. Both from a common gene set.

Take that; science. One of the twins decided she's a man in a woman's body, the other is quite happy to be a woman. Where did *that* come from?? And to a man, woman, whatever it is, they will say, I didn't ask for this, god gave this to me.

No. Adam gave that to you. You bear it in ignorance. It's part of this fallen world. But regeneration and sanctification out of this world . . . is possible. For those who are willing to forsake the lusts held in ignorance and pursue a holiness described in this book which is God's character, there is release from Adam.

Don't mis-understand me here. Changing from Adam's lusts held in ignorance is not a requirement for forgiveness and newness of life, but a **willingness** to be made Holy, as defined in this book, IS.

In John 7:17 Jesus says; *"If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself."* You don't come into God's kingdom wanting to hold onto all the baggage of Satan's kingdom. The line of demarcation is here. A willingness to do God's will. To be Holy as defined by God. To pursue a holiness set apart from the lusts of this world we held before in our ignorance.

The modern church says "all are welcome" in their newspaper ads. But Peter and Jesus say, you will be required to jettison this world's lusts, and pursue a holiness that looks like the God of this book. The lusts of this world and the holiness of God are water and oil. You can't mix them up. And that's why Jesus says, you have to at least be willing to do that. Don't think you're going to come in and keep all of the garbage of this world.

Peter's final argument is to fall back on the word of God. Peter quotes Moses. Four times in the book of Leviticus, God, speaking through

Moses says; You shall be Holy, for I am Holy.

Leviticus 11:44

*'For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.*

Leviticus 11:45

*'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 19:2

*"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 20:7

*'You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.*

In each case, the idea of consecration, separation, out of this world. Beloved, we are no longer citizens of this world. We are citizens of heaven, and our Holy God says, *therefore, you shall be holy, for I am holy.*

This is who you are! Therefore, this is how you live.

As we move farther and farther into this 21st century, the line of delineation, and demarcation, the real church from the pretend one, will be defined by this doctrine of holiness.

The pretend church rolls out the welcome mat for anyone, bring all the worlds garbage with you, no questions asked. But the real church must stand with Jesus and say, if you are not at least willing to be made holy as defined by a Holy God, you will not know, intimately and personally, that the doctrine and teaching of Jesus is true, because you can't bring the garbage, and belong to Jesus. Oil and water can never mix.

