

CHOOSING TO BE DIFFERENT

1 Peter 1:13-21

“...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct...”

(vs. 15)

This is Father’s Day and God in His sovereign providence has brought us to this wonderful text. Peter is calling all of us to walk upon the highway of holiness, but no one needs to hear this more than men; especially fathers. We live in a day when people are interested in heaven, but not holiness. We are interested in:

- Our health, but not holy living.
- Our happiness, but not holy thinking.
- Our helpfulness, but not holy hearts.

We don’t mind being saved but don’t get fanatical.

Question: Do you long to be holy before the Lord?

We make fun of people who do. We resist it: Holy joe; holier than thou; holy roller! Are there titles we label people who want to be different for God?

To be holy means to be different; set apart for a cause; separated unto God. It means to be different. Not odd! Not just dead to the world, but alive unto God. It is not where you are, but what you are.

There is a denomination of Christians called holiness. But that is not how we dress or simply what we don’t do. All Christians are to live holy lives! We are wonders of God in a wicked world. We live in a culture that opposes God’s rule and will. **“We know that we are of God, and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one.” (1 John 5:19)** Last week we said as believers we live in hope; because of that we are to walk in holiness. **“For every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:3)**

The world did not turn on Jesus because He was good, but because He was different. A holy person is different. His life has a quality about it that is different. His present lifestyle is not only different from his past lifestyle, but it is different from the lifestyle of unbelievers around him. Christians appear strange to the unbelieving world. Peter will say, ***“In regard to this, they are surprised that you don’t plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they slander you.” (1 Peter 4:4)*** But it is not strange to other children of God.

Today I want to encourage you and motivate you to long to live holy unto the Lord as obedient children. ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17)*** Not only new in DNA, but new in the capacity to live differently, made new to be holy! It’s not easy but it is possible.

I. Our anticipation of His return.

“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...” (1 Peter 1:13)

A. The revelation of Jesus Christ is His second return.

1. If you know Jesus and knew that Christ was returning today, what would you do differently?
2. You would want to clear up some things, change some things.
3. I remember inspections in the Army; you never knew when, but you knew they were coming so you kept your things in order.

B. Gird up the loins of your mind.

1. It meant “to get serious about living.”
2. We would say “roll up your sleeves.”
3. Prepare yourself for a different life. A soldier, an athlete, a farmer.

C. How do you do that?

1. Be single-minded. Paul said, ***“This one thing I do!”*** Live with the mindset that Jesus is coming and it might be today.
2. Be sober-minded. That means be serious, not somber. I love a joke; I don’t take myself seriously, but I do the things of God.
3. Have a steadfast mind. We are not to back up, let up or shut up until we are taken up. Keep at it. Jesus said the man who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy of the Kingdom of God. Peter lived in the time of Rome, but Rome’s advances did not impress him or Rome’s military might did not intimidate them. I began this series saying this world is not our home!

II. Our identification with his character.

“...as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1:14-16)

A. Sons identify with their fathers.

1. Have you heard the expression “like father like son?”
2. God’s likeness is holiness.
3. God’s character is love.

B. Why do I obey?

1. The obedience of a slave: They have to.
2. The obedience of an employee: They need to.
3. The obedience of a son: They want to.

***NOTE** Living God's way, following God's plan is not easy. We are either going to have discipline or be a drifter. What is the cause of indulgence? It's ignorance. Unsaved people lack spiritual intelligence and it causes them to give themselves to all kinds of fleshly and worldly indulgences. Nature determines appetites and actions. Dogs & cats behave differently because they have a different nature! We have a family likeness to share and a family loyalty to bear.

4. I don't want to disgrace God's name.

5. I don't want to have mistaken identity.

I often have to say, "I am Charlie Wilson, the clergyman, not congressman. I am motivated to bear God's name in honor."

III. Our examination as God's child.

"And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear..." (1 Peter 1:17)

A. I will stand before God and give an account to God.

1. It's not judgment of the lost.
2. It's the idea God is judging us, not for what's wrong, but looking for what is right.
3. God is examining us today. He is looking for family resemblances.

B. God is our judge and the judge is our Father.

1. It is a family judgment. I examine my kids, not looking for the bad to be mad about, but the good to rejoice about.
2. It is a fair judgment. God will not spoil His children. He does not wink at sin in your life.
3. It is a fearful judgment. This is not a fear of a slave to a master, but a reverence of a child.
 - Whom the Lord loves He chastens.

- Discipline is done for you; punishment is done to you.

***NOTE** I learned watching my evil brother Billy how to get a whippin. Billy would try to take off my dad and grab his arm with a hand like a vice. The further Billy got from my dad, the further the belt extended. I would run and grab my daddy by the leg. He had no leverage to really nail me plus he would hit his own leg. Every kid ought to give an offering.

My mother used to say it hurt her worse than me. I didn't believe that until I had children. Daddy said, "I discipline because I love." If that was the case, I know he must have loved me most! Until my dad went to heaven I respected, honored and loved him, and I carry the family name with a sense of honor. I love God but I also fear my God. "The fear of me Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

IV. Our emancipation by His cross.

***"...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.²⁰ He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."* (1 Peter 1:18-21)**

A. To redeem means to exchange something.

1. Growing up my mother got S & H Green Stamps.
2. They had a catalog and redemption centers.
3. Jesus exchanged his life for mine on the cross. He paid the price of sin; not of silver or gold but His blood!

B. Jesus set me free from our aimless life.

1. Most of us don't live vile lives, just vain lives.
2. It's not lives marked by hideous sin, but simply empty lives that makes little or no difference – "Empty behavior."

3. They don't amount to anything.

NOTE** Story of man at county fair who rode the merry-go-round. His wife said you paid your money, went round and round, got off where you go on and haven't been anywhere. At Pentecost Peter said, ***“Be saved from this perverse generation.” Jesus gave his life to purify our soul; not to live for the world, the flesh and the devil. He came so we could live His life out in our world.

C. How holiness is seen in our lives.

1. To be a disciple with my love.

“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart...” (1 Peter 1:22)

- His love is to be a filter that our actions go through.
- Love displays God's character. (1 Cor. 15)
 - Suffers long and is kind.
 - Does not envy.
 - Does not pride itself.
 - Does not seek its own.
 - Is not easily provoked.
 - Thinks no evil.
 - Rejoices in truth.

2. To be disciplined with my mouth.

“So rid yourselves of all wickedness, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander.” (1 Peter 2:1)

- Love is a distinguishing mark of believers - love for God and people. That's the Great Commandment.
- The mouth speaks what is in the heart. When my love is right this finds the high place. A mature love builds up, not tears down.

- The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, fruitfulness, gentleness, self-control.

3. To be disciplined in my desire for God's Word.

“Like newborn infants, desire (always thirsty) the unadulterated spiritual milk, so that you may grow by it in your salvation.” (1 Peter 2:2)

- He is not saying we are spiritual babies, but we should be thirsty for God's Word as a baby is for milk.
- Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness.
- Many have been intoxicated on God's Word in the past, but are no longer thirsty for His Word.

The Bible is not just a bestselling book; it is the Word of God. It's not God telling you what is wrong with you, but also what's right with you.

Keys to God's Word

1) I must accept its authority in my life. ***“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” (1 Thessalonians 2:13)***

2) I must assimilate God's Word into my life.

Have a prepared heart.

- By reading it.
- By researching it.
- By remembering it.
- By reflecting upon it.