

STUDIES IN FIRST PETER (Habits of the Holy – 1:14-21)

Introduction:

- I. 1 Peter 1 is filled with rich teachings from the inspired pen of Peter. Teachings that edify, exhort and encourage us to live better lives. Peter speaks of an elite election, a heavenly hope, and a fundamental focus. Now, in verses 14-21, Peter reveals to us the habits of the holy.
- II. This section follows naturally the exhortation of ver. 13. There Peter reminds us that we must have minds that are prepared for action by being properly focus. But now Peter gets down to the action part of Christianity. You see at the end of the day, a Christian cannot be separated from the life that he lives. Indeed, how we conduct ourselves in our daily lives determines whether or not we are really Christians. True Christians have holy habits and Peter reveals some of them in this text. So, let's look this morning at the habits of the holy.

Lesson:

I. The Holy Are in the Habit of Obeying God (ver. 14-16).

Have you ever been around a blatantly disobedient child? There are few things in life more shameful than a child that refuses to obey. Perhaps the only thing more shameful is a parent who refuses to discipline. Listen to this real life scene involving a nine year old girl.

Our family was on vacation, and my nine-year-old stepdaughter was up to her usual antics. It started with teasing her brother. As he screamed, I called her out of the room and made her sit at the kitchen table next to me. She began to get very mouthy and rude. I then had her sit on a chair, away from the activity of the family, for twenty minutes. That's when she began a tirade of dramatic remarks, namely that I hated her, the whole *family* hated her, and that she was "always punished for no reason." She screamed, stomped her feet, and shouted. When her father intervened, she yelled that she hated him, that he was "the worst thing in her life" and that her entire life was useless.

Sadly, this is a typical scene in the life of American children today. Do you know why? The problem is revealed by the statements of this mother. Did you notice that she referred to her stepdaughter's *usual antics*. Therein is the problem! The parents allowed these kind of disobedient antics to be usual.

But this is a pretty good illustration of what disobedience is before God. When children of God sin willfully, it is like the spoiled child throwing a

tantrum before God, screaming, shouting and stomping their feet in protest to God's rules. Is that the kind of child you want to be? Listen to me: if you refuse to attend every service, you'll acting like a spoiled child? If you refused to make it to services on time, demonstrating an impertinent disposition, you'll acting like that mouthy and rude child causing a scene. When you walk in darkness in spite of God's divine instruction to His children to walk in the light, you are throwing a spiritual tantrum before God. Now Peter is telling us that those who are holy don't do that. Those who are holy are in the habit of obeying God, not disobeying God. Let me ask you, are you're an obedient child. Peter approaches obedience from both the negative standpoint and the positive standpoint.

A. *Negative – “not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance” (ver. 14).*

Man is recidivistic by nature. Recidivism has to do with the tendency to relapse into a previous mode of behavior, especially criminal or sinful behavior. How often does the ex-drunkard start drinking again? How often does the reformed thief start stealing again? And how often does a converted Christian go back to a world of sin? I'm afraid it happens altogether too often. But we don't have to experience a spiritual relapse back into sin. We don't have to conform to our old way of living. We can with determination and dedication make up in our minds that we will walk in the newness of life. After all we are new creatures, aren't we? Paul said so!

2 Cor 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

In Christ we aim at new targets and live by new tenets. In Christ we walk a new road and travel a new route. In Christ we move forward with new fortitude and move on with a new attitude. Why? Because we are new creatures in Christ where old things are passed away and all things become new. We use to be selfish, but now we are selfless. We used to be self-centered, but now we are self-denying. But still we are recidivist beings and must do all we can to avoid falling back into our old habits. Someone has said bad habits are like comfortable beds--easy to get into but hard to get out of. And so whether we are talking about breaking a bad habit or endeavoring to avoid recapture, it takes a dogged determination and persistent planning to succeed.

What must we do to avoid fashioning ourselves according to our former lust? We must avoid former people, places and pastimes (2

Cor. 6:14-18). This is the habit of those who are holy. They do not stand in the way of sinners or dwell in places of iniquity. They do not play the devil's games or follow the devil's function. Instead the holy make a habit of being with the right people, going to the right places and engaging in the right kind of activities. Let me ask you, are you holy?

B. *Positive – “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.”*

To be holy is to be sanctified or set apart and devoted to God. All true Christians are holy, for Isaiah once said that the way of Christ would be *“the way of holiness.”* Now, this point may seem a little redundant. Our main point is that the holy are in the habit of obeying God; thus, when we put our main point with this sub-point, I'm basically saying that the holy are in the habit of being holy. But that's not as redundant as it might first appear. You see, there are two ways in which we are holy. There is positional holiness and then there is progressive holiness. We became holy positionally when we obeyed the gospel of Christ. This is something that God did for us the moment we came out of the waters of baptism.

1 Cor 1:2

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

1 Peter 1:2

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Col 1:13

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

When we obeyed the gospel we were moved positionally from outside of Christ to inside of Christ. We were moved from the darkness of the world into God's marvelous light. We were moved from the land of the lost to the country of Christianity and it all happened by God's sanctifying power. But now that we have been made holy by God, it is our responsibility to maintain that holiness by living holy lives (2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 6:20-22). And my point in this lesson is that this holiness is not a fluke. Living holy lives is not something we do part time or every once in while. If we are the kind of obedient children that God wants us to be, then we are

habitually holy. Everyday we live holy. Everywhere we go we live holy. Everything we do, we do it with holiness. Peter said, "...*be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*"

Someone says, "but we are surrounded by sin." Yes, but our hearts and minds are set apart. People around you may cuss and curse, but you don't because you are set apart. People around you may dance, drink and be defiant, but you don't and you are not because you are set apart. People around you break the law and bend the rules, but you don't because you are set apart. People around you may partake in revelling and riotous living, but you do not because you have been set apart. You see as Christians it doesn't matter what is going on in this sinful world, we have been separated, set apart and sanctified and so we are in the habit of holy living.

And Peter even tells us why we should make sure that this is so. *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (ver. 16).* The importance of being like God should never be underestimated. To a large extent, people determine what kind of God we serve and what kind of Savior we have by what they see in us.

Died for Freedom

On a wall near the main entrance to the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, is a portrait with the following inscription: 'James Butler Bonham, no picture of him exists. This portrait is of his nephew, Major James Bonham, deceased, who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family that people may know the appearance of the man who died for freedom.' - Bill Morgan

No literal portrait of God exists either. But the likeness of God who adopted us as His children, should be seen in us. I believe this to be God's primary reason for wanting us to be holy. Yes, every father wants his children to emulate him. I was always pleased when Jordan wanted to do things just because he saw me doing them (e.g. of Jordan wanting to drink whatever I drank). But whether we like it or not, or even whether it is completely fair or not, parents are often judged by the actions of their children. And this is true when it comes to God and His children (Rom. 2:21-24). Surely we don't want God to be blamed and blasphemed because we refuse to live holy lives, do we? So let's do all we can to be obedient child, not just sporadically, but habitually.

II. The Holy Are in the Habit of Fearing God.

It is interesting to me that man has become so fearful. Let me give you a partial list of phobias that people have today.

- Peladophobia – fear of baldness.
- Chaetophobia – fear of hairy people.
- Dextrophobia – fear of objects on the right side of the body.
- Levophobia – fear of objects on the left side of the body.
- Thalassophobia – fear of sitting down.
- Porphyrophobia – fear of the color purple.
- Phobophobia – fear of being afraid.

Now I certainly don't want to make fun of real fears that people have, but come on, some phobias are just silly aren't they? And while I'm am sort of making light of this, there is something that is disturbingly real. We live in a world where people fear just about everything under the sun, but very few people fear the One who made the sun. There is an alarming lack of godly fear in our society today. And as a result of that people pass the time of their sojourning here on earth without any thought to the way they live their lives. Well Peter reminds us in ver. 17 of the importance of fearing God.

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.

So we better stop fearing things we have no business worrying about, and start fearing God.

On March 5, 1979, nine U.S. satellites simultaneously radioed back to earth that a gamma radiation explosion occurred in a nearby galaxy. This explosion lasted for only one-tenth of a second, but released more radiation than our sun does in 3,000 years. Doyle Evans, an astrophysicist in New Mexico, noted that had this explosion occurred in our galaxy, it would have instantly vaporized the earth! Furthermore, I don't know that scientist today could come up with a convincing argument, scientifically speaking, that says that same thing couldn't happen in our galaxy at any moment.

Now let me ask you, does that scare you? Do you worry about things of that nature, global warming and other problems with the planet? Many people around the globe are terrified about it. But listen to me: if you fear God, you don't have to spend one second worrying about some outer space explosion. Why? Because as the song writer said, "He's got the whole world in His hand." Listen: there won't be any boom, bang or galactic blast unless God says so.

Col 1:16-17

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

And let me tell you something else. While there won't be any accidental explosion to destroy the earth and end the world, the end is coming and the earth will be destroyed. Listen to Peter.

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Now because of this, Peter tells us that our sojourning here should be past in fear. And he gives us two reasons why such should be the case.

A. The judgment of God.

If there is one thing the Bible is clear about it is the fact that there is going to be a day of judgment. And while the Bible is clear that those who reject Jesus will be lost, punishment is waiting for disobedient children of God too. Listen to me: we better take sin and the business of holy living seriously because God does. There is a connection between the words of Peter in our text and the words that he wrote in chapter 3. Listen to what Peter says as he continues to talk about the time when this world ends.

2 Peter 3:11-14

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Why is this important? Why should we be holy and godly in our conversation and live blamelessly and without spot? Because there is a day of judgment coming. And in judgment God, Peter says, is no respect of persons. Someone says, *"I've been a child of God a long time."* It doesn't matter, if you die in sin you will have to pay the price. *"I haven't been a Christian very long."* It doesn't

matter, if you die in sin you will have to pay the price. *“But the environment that I live in makes it harder to live a holy life.”* It doesn't matter, if you die in sin you will have to pay the price. *“But my circumstances are tough and my situation is rough.”* It doesn't matter, if you die in your sin you will have to pay the price. God, ladies and gentlemen, will judge us all without respect of person. The standard is the Word of God and either you are living by it or you're not. And let us not forget what Peter said in 1 Peter 4:17.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

So whether we are a saint or a sinner you better fear God, that is, we better give Him the respect and the reference that He deserves and it better be demonstrated by the life that we live.

B. God's Plan of Salvation.

God's plan of salvation should inspire our fear because it demonstrates both the love and mercy of God, as well as His awesome power.

- 1. *Our redemption cost a severe price.*** The Greek word for redeem here means to ransom. It involves both the price paid and the deliverance experienced by those who are set free. And what was the price. Peter emphasizes that it was more than silver and gold. We live in a world where silver and gold rules the day. Whatever you want you want to purchase, you can do it if you have enough silver and gold. Money is all-important in our society today.

Illustration

A man called the church and asked if he could speak to the Head Hog at the Trough. The secretary said, "Who?" The man replied, "I want to speak to the Head Hog at the Trough!" Sure that she had heard correctly, the secretary said, "Sir, if you mean our pastor, you will have to treat him with more respect and ask for 'the reverend' or 'the pastor'. But certainly you cannot refer to him as the Head Hog at the Trough!" The man responded, "I see. Well, I have \$10,000 I was thinking about donating to the building fund." The secretary exclaimed, "Oh my, hold the line, I think the big pig just walked through the door!"

Money changes everything in our society. But listen to me: money can't change your spiritual condition. Money couldn't

pay the price for sin, only the precious blood of Jesus could do that. And it couldn't be just any blood; it had to be the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:12-14).

2. ***Our justification took a great act.*** It wasn't enough for Jesus to die; He had to be raised from the dead in order for us to have a chance at redemption (ver. 21; Rom. 4:25).

Now, this raising of Jesus from the dead, is a constant and continual testimony of the power of God (Eph. 1:19-20). This is the power that should cause us to walk here on earth with fear. This is the power that should persuade us to live holy lives as obedient children. Let me tell you, ladies and gentlemen, if God could raise Jesus from the dead, He can fulfill all of his precepts and promises concerning us. He can either cast us into a devil's hell or deliver us into a place of paradise. But what He does depends on what we do. Do you fear God enough to obey God. If you are truly holy, you make a habit of it.

Conclusion:

What kind of habits do you have? The holy make a habit of obeying God by forgetting their former way of life and living holy. The truly holy make a habit of fearing God, remembering that He will judge us without respect of persons and that He redeemed us by the precious blood of His Son whom He raised from the dead.