

## Living in response to the Gospel *1 Peter 1:13-2:3*

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Welcome to the second week of our series through the book of 1 Peter. In the first half of chapter 1, Peter reminded believers of the astounding living hope we have because of the mercy and work of God. In light of that, he then turns his attention to how they should live in light of this great news. Salvation is not simply something we receive, but something we also are called to live out through faith and allegiance to God expressed in holy living.

What did you feel God speaking to you through the message on Sunday?

### Sober-minded holiness (1:13-17)

In your own words, how would you define holiness?

Peter mentions a fair few reasons and motivations for believers to live a distinctly Christian and holy life in this passage. What reasons do you see listed in these verses? Does any one of them particularly stand out to you and something that powerfully motivates you towards pursuing holiness?

Two of the big motivators listed are the future realities of Christ's coming (v13) and God's judgment (v17).

- What is it about Christ's future coming that should get our undivided attention? How does it inspire hope, and inspire self-control and soberness?
- What happens in our lives when we don't *really* expect Christ to come soon?
- In our culture, people get incredibly upset and react angrily if any part of their life or lifestyle is judged by another. But what happens to the preaching of the Gospel if final judgment is downplayed or ignored?
- What do you think would be some characteristics of a life lived as 'foreigners here in reverent fear'?

The big 'therefore' of v13 recalls all of God's past, present and future work in our salvation as explained in verses 1-12. The effect of Peter's words is: now that I have reminded you of the proper perspective, it's time to pull yourselves together, stay focused and live this out!

D.A. Carson wrote:

*"People do not drift toward Holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated." — D.A. Carson*

What in that quote resonates with you?

In what ways are our old selves, our fleshly desires, the world, and our culture all seeking to conform us (in ways that are opposed to the holiness we are called to live out)?

How can we be vigilant and guarded against being conformed? (are there any verses you can think of to back that up?)

### **So much good news!! (1:18-25)**

The danger in not talking about holy living is that we start to preach “cheap grace”. On the other hand the danger in overly focusing on holy living is that we can start to become legalistic. How does Peter balance the grace we have received from God with the holiness we are called to live out in response to God?

Often when we focus on the ways our lives do not live up to the holy standard God calls us to we can start to feel “not good enough” or of little worth or value. What does 1 Peter 1:18-19 say about your worth? What does it say about God’s love for you when you were at your worst? How confident can we be of the permanence of this change (v23-25)?

Part of our motivation for holiness comes from remembering what we have been saved from, or what our lives would be like without God’s mercy. The Greek word that describes our old way of life in v18 (‘empty’) literally means: pertaining to being of no use, idle, empty, fruitless, useless, powerless, lacking truth. Ouch! Share some of the ways you are no longer those things because of the work of God in your life.

What does v18-21 tell us about Jesus? (and for bonus marks: what do these verses tell us about Jesus in relation to the Old Testament Scriptures?)

### **Living it out**

In chapter 2:1 Peter builds his argument with another ‘therefore’. In light of all Chapter 1 we are to *turn from* certain ways (v1) and *turn to* certain ways (v2). If comfortable, share something that God has been convicting you to ‘rid yourself’ of?

Finally, the instruction is to crave (or ‘acquire a taste for’) the Word (1:23-2:3). The illustration is that we are in need of the Word to grow, that we have an innate desire for it (like a baby for milk) but that we may have to work to increase our appetite and taste for it. How can you develop a hunger for God’s Word?

How does being fed by the Word affect our minds, hearts and behaviours in a way that grows us up in our salvation (v3)?