

Christ Reformation Church

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Living as Exiles in a Hostile World – The Epistle of 1 Peter

**(Part 13 – Bought With a Lamb’s Blood)
October 2, 2016**

Sermon Text: 1 Peter 1:15-16

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:1-31

This morning we are going to consider several more truths the Apostle Peter has written here in this latter portion of chapter one. Before we do, let me add a few follow up thoughts from last time when we learned that taking the name of the Lord in vain is most frequently and wickedly committed by the false professor, the religious hypocrite who has the outward form of godliness but in reality denies its power. He’s all show but he does not know the Lord whose Name he speaks shamelessly.

We said that we must always be on guard against counterfeit religion that parades as the religion of Christ. And we saw that at the root of such a false system (such as that of the Pharisees) are inevitably *the traditions of men that are paraded as the Word of God*. Much of the New Testament (and OT as well) is devoted to exposing just such systems that enslave people and lead us away from Christ:

Col 2:20-23 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— (21) "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (22) (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? (23) These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

So wickedly ingenious are these wolves in sheep’s clothing that people can actually embrace their systems for

years and years, be raised up in them, and all the while *believe that the religion they are living is Christianity*. But it is not. Paul had that kind of awakening on the Damascus Road you remember. *His religion was actively opposed to the very God he believed he was serving with zeal*.

Our friend Rebecca Davis is going to be publishing a new book soon. The title is *Untwisting Scriptures That Were Used to Tie You Up, Gag You, and Tangle Your Mind*. You are going to want to read it. She deals with several very common twisting of Scripture that parade as biblical truth and yet are anything but that. Repeatedly on our blog we hear from Christians who came to realize that the “gospel” they zealously bought into for many years was not the gospel of Christ at all.

So we must take the warnings of Christ very, very seriously: *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*. This requires us to know Christ, be led by His Spirit, LISTEN to that leading, and be immersed in His Word in a way that does not take some pre-fabricated doctrinal system grid and overlay it on every verse we come to, forcing that verse to “fit” the stencil.

I think that we see this false man-produced tradition based “Christianity”

indicated in Scripture in texts such as these:

Mat 7:28-29 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, (29) for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

God’s Word in truth has power. It bears His own authority. It is vastly different than the word of men that claims to be the Word of God but is not. And somehow the people realized this. They sensed a new, freeing wind blowing in Christ’s words. They were *astonished*.

Jer 23:28-30 Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. (29) Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? (30) Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who steal my words from one another.

“You have heard that it was said...but I say to you...”

Mat 23:1-4 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, (2) "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, (3) so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they

do. For they preach, but do not practice. (4) They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

[See Nehemiah 8:4-8 on this]

That is to say, the scribes and Pharisees would read the Law of Moses, *but their interpretation and application of the Word of God was all wrong and ended up enslaving people to a man-made system parading as true religion.*

Alright then – there is the warning repeated, as Scripture repeats it. Beware of the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees. We have them all around us today and it is very dangerous to become complacent and careless, just sitting back and assuming all that we are taught in the name of Christ is in fact the Word of Christ.

Back then to 1 Peter:

1Pe 1:14-25 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, (15) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, (16) since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

(17) And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, (18) knowing that **you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, (19) but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.**

(20) He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you (21) who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

(22) Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, (23) **since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;**

(24) for **"All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, (25) but the word of the Lord remains forever."** And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Ransomed With Precious Blood 18-19

We are all born into this world as *heirs*. Not heirs of God, which only comes with the new birth in Christ, but heirs of, as Peter calls it, *futile ways of our forefathers*. What does he mean? I think Scripture tells us:

Jer 9:13-15 And the LORD says: "Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it, (14) but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them. (15) Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink.

Jer 16:19-20 O LORD, my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble, to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and say: "Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies, worthless things in which there is no profit. (20) Can man make for himself gods? Such are not gods!"

1Co 12:2 You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.

What does every single human being "inherit from his forefathers" in his fallen, human nature? False gods. Idols. Futile, empty, profitless philosophy and religion that cannot save.

And Peter says that we were *ransomed* from all of that. That means we were at one time slaves to it, as Paul puts it: *you were led astray to mute idols*. Every single newborn baby is an idolater at heart. You were and so was I. I have heard professing Christians say "I cannot remember a time when I did not believe in Jesus." Well, be assured, there was a time! We not only inherited a fallen nature (original sin) but we inherited the world's religion, passed down to us from our forefathers. That idolatry takes many forms:

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Mormonism
- Legalistic Christianity
- Liberal Christianity
- Materialism
- Good ol' boy God will let you into heaven anyway
- Atheism
- Spiritism

And on and on and on it goes. If you were fortunate enough to be born into a true Christian home, then your

parents faithfully presented Christ to you, but at some point if you go back in the line of your “forefathers” far enough, you will find a heritage of idolatry that had to be broken.

We were, Peter says, *ransomed from this emptiness*. Not with silver or gold, but with the blood of Christ. Listen as I read to you these very helpful historic insights about this ransoming from the power of a god with silver or gold business:

“The redemption language has deep roots in both the Greco-Roman and the Jewish worlds. The verb rendered ‘redeemed’ [ESV ‘ransomed’]...was used, for instance, for the manumission [the act of freeing a slave] of slaves in Greco-Roman culture. The slave’s price could be deposited (by the slave or by some kind of benefactor) in the temple of a local god or goddess, which money, minus a commission for the temple, would be paid out of the temple’s treasury to the slave’s owner, with the result that ownership of the slave passed, nominally, to the god of the temple. The former slave was then free from his former master and would be viewed as a slave of the god or goddess, which for all intents and purposes meant that the slave was free.

The purchase price for this redemption was referred to as a ‘time’.

Of course manumission could also take place in Jewish culture....: ‘The Lord will redeem the lives of his slaves; none who hope in him will go astray.’ Indeed, redemption also refers to the deliverance of God’s people from foreign domination, whether from exile or from the original enslavement in Egypt. Clearly Peter is using this language to talk about how Christians have been redeemed from their own captivity. Now they are free, but they are slaves to God.

Second, just as the manumission of the slave or the rescue of the people from captivity meant that they had been rescued from a former way of life that was empty, so Peter picks up the same terminology and applies it to the Christian converts whom he is addressing: ‘You have been redeemed ‘out of’ the useless way of life you inherited from your ancestors.

With what then are Christians purchased, redeemed, ransomed? Not with the time of silver and gold but rather with the timios (precious) blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect....Nothing from their old life could have redeemed them, certainly not silver and gold; rather they have been redeemed by God’s own powerful act in the death and resurrection of His Son.” [Beale, Commentary on the NT Use of the OT].

You see it then? Bought with a price. You were a slave to emptiness and death and the devil. Your freedom was paid by God in Christ and now we are free, slaves to Him.

THEREFORE – Be holy as your Father is holy. And, love one another earnestly from a pure heart. Genuine, real, heart-originating love for one another is one of the chief expressions of holiness.

Peter will drive this point home once again by reminding us of the great miracle God has effected in us:

1Pe 1:22-25 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, (23) since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (24) for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, (25) but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Born again. But this time around the "seed" that birthed us effects eternal life, not temporal life ending in death. To prove this, Peter quotes from Isaiah 40. Flesh, it says, is like grass. The seed that a plant comes from is

perishable seed because it can only give temporary life. Grass soon flowers, then withers and dies, leaving more seed. But that seed too is perishable. And so this is a picture of human life in a fallen world.

Ecc 2:15-16 Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. (16) For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool!

Ecc 3:19 For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity.

If we were left to only our first birth into this perishing world, then all is vain, empty, and futile. Because everything in this world is of "perishable seed."

But, as Peter reminds us, something incredible has happened in Christ. The Word of God, the gospel, that living Word, came to us like a seed. It found root in us where the Lord had prepared good soil for it, and it sprang to life. This time the one who was born was

born to eternal life – imperishable. You are a new creation with a new, pure heart capable of loving one another and loving God.

So, be who you are. This is the good news that was preached to you. And that same Word, that Seed of Abraham is coming once again. He will say, one final time, “let there be...”, and the New Creation will blossom and never die.

Heb 12:26-29 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." (27) This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. (28) Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, (29) for our God is a consuming fire.