

# GIRDED UP TO HOLINESS

## 1 Peter 1:13-16

### INTRODUCTION

- “It’s not the ship in the water but the water in the ship that sinks it. So it’s not the Christian in the world but the world in the Christian that constitutes the danger.” (J. Wilbur Chapman)
- The analogy of the Christian with a ship on the sea is instructive
  - ✓ There is to be a distinction, a separation between the children of light and the children of darkness
  - ✓ The Christian is not at home in this world, but on a voyage through it, heading for his desired haven
  - ✓ Despite the tempest and violence of the world, the Christian ultimately overcomes it
  - ✓ The force of the currents and tides of the world do not direct the Christian – he goes against the flow
- Biblical Christianity is not popular with the world, nor is it popular with most professing Christians
- With v.13 begins the practical instruction of Peter’s epistle
- In the introductory twelve verses, Peter enumerates the blessings and privileges of salvation that God has graciously bestowed upon us
- He has chosen us (v.2), begotten us to a living hope (v.3), given us an eternal inheritance (v.4), kept us (v.5), tried us (vv.6-7), and, in essence, given us a salvation so great that even the angels look at with wonder (v.12)
- In using the word “wherefore” (*dio*), meaning “consequently” or “therefore”, he sums up all those blessings of salvation, and proceeds to exhort on the basis of them
- The faith of the saints in the introduction now flows into the practice of the saints for the remainder of the epistle

- Believing results in behaving; salvation comes first, then holiness
- Once we are saved, we are called to a holy life, and moreover, we are enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit to live a holy life
- So here the commands begin; there are some 37 imperative verbs (commands) for believers given throughout this short epistle

In these verses, Peter reasons with Christ's scattered pilgrims, "Since then we have all these privileges by grace"...

## **I. IN OUR THINKING WE ARE TO HOPE UNTO THE COMING OF CHRIST** (13)

### A. Gird up the loins of your mind

1. In ancient times men wore tunics or robes that went below the knees, which would require pulling up and tucking into a girdle/belt when running, fighting or labouring (1 Kings 18:46; Job 38:3)
2. The loins are the place of strength and power
3. The girded-up loins indicate preparedness and readiness to apply full exertion to a task (Exodus 12:11; Luke 12:35)
4. The metaphors of the Christian life required girded-up loins
  - a. Soldiers (2 Timothy 2:3-4)
  - b. Athletes (2 Timothy 2:5)
  - c. Labourers (2 Timothy 2:6-7)
5. To have a girded-up *mind* is to have our thoughts resolute and fixed upon God spiritual things
  - a. Such is a mind has been transformed and renewed by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:2)
  - b. It involves "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5)

- c. It requires us to have the mind of Christ in us (Philippians 2:5) – a humble, selfless, sacrificial mind
  - d. It requires continual meditation on the word of God (Psalm 1:2)
  - e. It dwells upon those things that God approves of: things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8)
  - f. The girdle of the mind is God’s truth (Ephesians 6:14)
6. An ungirded mind is one that is easily distracted, indecisive, double-minded
  7. An ungirded mind harbours worry, fear, doubts, envy, unforgiveness, bitterness, impurity
  8. *“Men are so little braced up as to conscientious conviction and vigorous resolve, that they easily go to pieces if assailed by error or temptation. The teaching necessary for to-day is this: “Gird up the loins of your mind,” brace yourselves up; pull yourselves together; be firm, compact, consistent, determined. Do not fritter away life upon trifles, but live to purpose, with undivided heart, and decided resolution.”* (C H Spurgeon)

## B. Be sober

1. Sober (*nepho*) means to be controlled, self-restrained (1 Peter 4:7; 5:8)
2. Contrast this with drunkenness, which brings loss of control, unrestraint, dullness (Ephesians 5:18)

## C. Hope to the end

1. The main verb of this verse is “hope” which is an imperative (command)
2. The verbs for “gird up” and “be sober” are participles that function as adverbs to describe the nature of our hope – “Wherefore *having girded* up the loins of your mind, *being sober*, **hope** to the end...”
3. The word for hope (*elpisate*) is translated “trusted” in 3:5 and is a “confident expectation”

4. This is a call for the saints to remain steadfast in the confidence of the gospel, no matter how severe the trials, or how alluring the temptations (Hebrews 10:35-36)
5. We are to look to the future grace that will be bestowed upon us at Christ's coming
  - a. God was gracious in saving us (Ephesians 2:8)
  - b. He continues to be gracious in sustaining us (Hebrews 4:16)
  - c. His grace to us will be crowned the coming of Christ, and for all eternity
6. The hope will be realised at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ
  - a. Note that this is the fourth time so far that Peter has mentioned the Second Coming of Christ in this epistle (vv.5,7,11)
  - b. The Second Coming is a motivator to pure Christian living (1 John 3:3)
7. All believers, but especially persecuted believers, must set their thoughts with confident hope upon the Lord's return, which will put our present trials in perspective and help us persevere for Christ until the end (Romans 8:18)

## **II. IN OUR CHARACTER WE ARE TO BE OBEDIENT TO THE WILL OF CHRIST (14)**

- A. The believer as a child of God
  1. By nature, we are children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), children of hell (Matthew 23:15), and children of the devil (John 8:44)
  2. Those who receive Christ and believe on his name are regenerated, born again into the family of God (John 1:12-13)
  3. By adoption, we are received into the number, and enjoy the rights and privileges of, the sons of God (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6-7)
  4. Because of our relationship to God, we are obligated to obey him

- a. He is our Creator, and has the right to demand our obedience
  - b. He is our Lord and King, and has all authority over us
  - c. He is our Redeemer, having purchased us unto himself
  - d. He is our Father, and requires our reverence, love and obedience
- B. The believer is a “child of obedience”
1. The literal rendering of “children of obedience” is a Hebraism whereby people are called “children” of that which they are devoted to (cf. Ephesians 2:2)
  2. Hence, the Christian is characterised by a life of obedience to God’s law
- C. The believer has a new walk
1. The word for “fashioned” (*suschematizo*) is translated “conformed” in Romans 12:2 and indicates the conforming of a substance into the mould it is cast into
  2. There is a fashioning of the world, and there is a fashioning of the Christian – they are not the same
  3. Peter emphasises in this epistle the reality that for every Christian, his life history is comprised of two parts: “Before Christ”, and “After Christ” (1 Peter 2:9; Romans 6:17)
  4. The various “former lusts” are listed in several New Testament passages (Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:29-31; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Peter 4:3)
  5. In our unbelief, we are ignorant
    - a. This is an ignorance as a consequence of our spiritual deadness inherited from Adam (Ephesians 2:1)
    - b. It is an ignorance of spiritual blindness from sin and Satan (Ephesians 4:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4)

- c. It is a wilful ignorance from man's rebellious heart that by nature chooses Satan's darkness over God's light (Romans 1:28)
  - d. Man is responsible for his ignorance and will be judged for it (Acts 17:30)
  - e. It is an ignorance that can only be removed by the grace of God "shining in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6)
6. In salvation, God delivers us from our life of sinful ignorance, and gives us a personal, experiential knowledge himself, and of his righteous will for our lives that we may walk in it

### III. IN OUR MORALS WE ARE TO BE HOLY IN IMITATION OF CHRIST (15-16)

#### A. Holiness is required of believers

1. Holy (*hagios*) is to be pure, righteous sinless, separated from sin and separated unto God
2. Throughout the Bible, people (Deuteronomy 7:6), places (Exodus 3:5) and objects (Exodus 29:37) are described as "holy" when they are separated to God for his purposes
3. Holiness in reference to believers is a moral purity
  - a. It is a sharing of God's purity, as there is no holiness independent of God
  - b. It is putting away sin and living unto righteousness (Ephesians 4:22-24)
  - c. It is godliness (2 Peter 3:11)
4. Positionally, all believers are holy because they are redeemed and set apart in Christ (Hebrews 3:1)
  - a. All believers are "sanctified" (*hagiois*) (Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:14)
  - b. All believers are "saints" (*hagiois*) (Romans 1:7; 8:27; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Hebrews 6:10)

5. Practically, believers must strive to walk in holiness in their daily conduct (2 Timothy 2:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Hebrews 12:14)

B. We are called to holiness

1. "Calling" is a theme in 1 Peter
  - a. Called to be holy (1:15)
  - b. Called "out of darkness into his marvellous light" (2:9)
  - c. Called to suffer and follow Christ's example (2:21)
  - d. Called "to inherit a blessing" (3:9)
  - e. Called to "his eternal glory" (5:10)
2. Holiness is not merely a religious obligation, but a divine calling from God himself to every Christian personally
3. God foreknew me, elected me, drew me, enabled me to repent and believe, regenerated me, sanctified me, and has called me to be conformed to him in holiness

C. The degree of our holiness – all manner of conversation

1. This is the highest standard possible
2. "Conversation" includes not just our speech, but our entire manner of life
3. Holiness is not to be relegated to one segment of our life, or certain days of the week, but is to permeate our entire being
4. It flows from a sanctified heart, and works out in a purified life

D. The standard of holiness – God

1. God's perfect holiness is the standard by which we are to compare ourselves, and to which we are to strive for

2. Most people prefer to compare themselves with other people, usually those deemed worse than us (Luke 18:11; 2 Corinthians 10:12)
3. But Christ said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)
4. Holiness is one of God's communicable attributes that he bestows upon his creatures

E. The command of holiness – "Because it is written"

1. Peter, quoting Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, shows the Scriptural foundation of our call to holiness
2. Holiness is not an option that we can either choose or reject – it is essential
3. The word of God not only commands holiness, but it is the means by which holiness is developed in us (Psalm 119:9,11; John 15:3; 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

## CONCLUSION

1. Where your vision is fixed, your life will follow
2. Abraham looked to the world to come, and lived by faith, pleasing God, and bringing blessing
3. Lot looked to this world's wealth and pleasure, and walked by sight, displeasing God, and bringing judgment
4. Can you say with Paul, "this one thing I do" (Philippians 3:13-14), or is your mind being distracted by the things of this world?
5. Are looking, waiting and preparing for the soon return of Jesus Christ?
6. And are you growing in holiness day by day?
7. The most fulfilled, blessed and happy life is the *holy* life (Matthew 5:8)