

A Living Hope on Our Journey Home

1 Peter 1:1-16

Easter Sunday

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Sunday, April 5, 2015, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

“From Adam to Moses death reigned; but the presence of the Word [Jesus] abolished death. No longer in Adam are we all dying. In Christ we are all reviving.” - **Athanasius of Alexandria**, AD 373

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead! He is risen! What a glorious Resurrection Day! This morning is a message about how the Resurrection of Jesus Christ changes our lives.

Please open your Bible to **1 Peter 1:1-16**. Today is Resurrection Sunday. This morning we are looking at a message entitled: "Living Hope on Our Journey Home."

Christ's resurrection didn't end with Easter Sunday. The whole New Testament is filled with texts that tell us we who were dead in sin are now alive and risen with Christ!

So it is not a surprise that I have chosen one of those texts for Resurrection Sunday! The book of 1 Peter is about suffering and brokenness. The message is that while we are being crushed by suffering, we are also being transformed by the resurrection power of Jesus in your life!

Feeling Like a Stranger

Have you ever felt like a stranger? Have you ever felt out of place? I have. I moved from Chicago to **Louisiana**. I learned how to say "ya'll." I learned how to eat jambalaya. I tried to learn to eat grits, but I just couldn't. I joyfully learned to eat crawfish!

We've all felt out of place. I remember when my mom died. I felt out of place. My father was in Chicago, and my mother was gone.

I felt the same way again when we moved to **Spain**. I tried to fit in but I was out of place!

When I came to know Jesus, I knew I'd never feel at home in this world ever again. This world is not my home. I'm just a' passin' through!

Redeeming Us out of the Mess

Sometimes we feel that we are never going to recover from bad decisions in life. Some have made bad financial decisions. Others have made bad family decisions. All of us have sinned and made bad moral decisions.

But Jesus has come to redeem us out of this mess! He was dead, but now He lives forevermore!

A Living Hope!

Peter writes to the “elect exiles” and says: “³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Aren't you glad that because of the resurrection, as bad as things might be, this is not our final home? We have a living hope in Jesus Christ being raised from the dead! We have hope!

No other religion can offer this kind of hope.

Mohammed can only offer Allah, a god of war, and a god where there is no hope or assurance of eternal life. A god who degrades women and promises 70 virgins to those who die killing for Allah. So sad. Mohammed is dead and offers a fictional god and savior.

Hinduism offers over 300 Million gods. They offer a slight of hand salvation, saying that all ways lead to the truth. Yet they do not teach any hope of an afterlife. There is no heaven or hell, only karma and reincarnation. So sad. Krishna and all their man-made messiahs are dead and buried.

What of **Buddah** and **Confucius**? Dead and gone. You can visit their graves. None offered a way of salvation.

Alive Forevermore

But there is one who is alive. He has an empty tomb. Jesus is the only one who claimed to be the way to eternal life. No one else of any significance has offered such a thing. He said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6). Jesus Christ is raised from the dead! He is our Living Hope!

He said, “I am He that lives, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18).

THERE IS HOPE IN YOUR TRIALS. THERE IS HOPE FOR YOUR SINS! Jesus is alive!!

Feeling Like a Foreigner as Rome Burns

1 Peter 1:1 “¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia...

The Apostle Peter felt like such a foreigner. He had a message that was changing the world. The Kingdom of God has come. Jesus is risen from the dead. But with the resurrection of Jesus came great persecution. First from the Jews, and then from Rome.

There was a great persecution from Nero beginning in the Roman Empire. Peter had been arrested. This was the end of the road for him. So he writes to a group of people in modern day Turkey that would be the equivalent of “the utter most parts of the world.”

Rome had burned and Nero blamed the Christians. There was an especially vicious attack on Christians in Asia Minor and what is today western Turkey. Ephesus is here. In fact all of the seven churches are here. As well Colossae, Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, Phrygia, and Troas. This is the area where the most growth of the church was. Peter writes to them at Rome's burning...

A Strange Double Life

All Christians are living a strange double life: Peter addresses his audience as ‘foreigners’, not because they have emigrated to where they now live but because they now have a dual citizenship. They are, simultaneously, inhabitants of this or that actual country or district (Pontus, Galatia, or wherever), and citizens of God’s new world which, as he will shortly say, is waiting to be unveiled.¹

Elect Ones Living as Foreigners

We are “chosen” or “elect” foreigners. Our home is in heaven. “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...” (Phil 3:20). Because of the transforming power of Christ’s resurrection, we are no longer the same.

A Trinitarian Encouragement

When life is hard, have you ever wanted someone to tell you it’s gonna be ok? God is in control? Well that’s exactly what verse 2 is all about.

Your life is in God’s control. He is saving you. All the bad stuff will work out for good. We have a three-fold encouragement from the author of our salvation, the triune God.

1 Peter 1:2b, our salvation is “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood...”

No matter what we are going through, we can rest that we are chosen by the triune God!

The **Father** has foreknown, or better, **foreLOVED** you.

The **Spirit** has committed to **sanctify** you to the very end, and

The **Son** Jesus Christ has declared you “not guilty” by **washing** us in His blood!

Behold the beauty of the triune God!! Are you encouraged? Well then Peter gives us a cosmic math equation that will encourage you as well.

My Kind of Multiplication

1 Peter 1:2b, “May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

Here is Peter’s **cosmic multiplication formula**. I was never that great at complex math, but I sure do need this kind of multiplication in my life. **Grace** and **peace** superabound to us! Aren’t you grateful for the resurrection of Christ that makes this possible for us?

Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve!! However great your sin is, God’s grace is infinitely greater!

Peace harkens back to the Old Testament word “Shalom” – it doesn’t just mean an absence of war. It means total well-being.

Listen everything is going to be all right with each of us because of the resurrection of Jesus. God’s grace and peace are upon you dear ones. They are **multiplied** to you! That’s the kind of **math program** I want to be a part of!

Because of the resurrection, no matter what you are going through, you have hope! You have a living hope!

¹ Wright, T. (2011). *Early Christian Letters for Everyone: James, Peter, John and Judah* (pp. 49–50). London; Louisville, KY: SPCK; Westminster John Knox Press.

Outline: 6 Fountains of Hope

We have 6 fountains of hope in the Christian life because of Jesus' Resurrection!

Because of Jesus' resurrection all Christians have the hope of:

1. A Transformed Journey, vs. 3
2. An Inheritance after the Journey, vs. 4
3. Power in the Journey, vs. 5
4. Joy in the Journey, vs. 6-9
5. A Privileged Journey, vs. 10-12
6. A Messy, but Victorious Journey, vs. 13-16

Because of Jesus' resurrection all Christians have the hope of:

I. **A Transformed Journey**, vs. 3

1 Peter 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

The very early church father, Clement of Alexandria said that we have hope because Christ raises from the dead within us! His resurrection was historical. On the third day, he triumphed over death and hell for us on that Easter morning 2000 years ago.

Clement of Alexandria Quote

Listen to what Clement says is the result of His resurrection: “The resurrection of Christ has made it possible for human beings to be born again and to become the heirs of God’s promises. This inheritance is being kept in heaven for us and will be fully revealed at the end of time. **Christ rises again in us according to our faith**, just as earlier he died in us because of our unbelief.”² Praise God for our transformation that comes from Christ’s resurrection.

The Start of Our Transformation: Regeneration

Listen to a great truth stated by Peter, 1 Pet. 1:2, “he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

God caused you to receive a new nature. You were raised from death in your sins to life in Christ with the same power that raised Jesus from the dead!

It wasn’t your idea. You didn’t raise yourself. You weren’t looking for God. He was looking for you. God wasn’t lost; you were!

*Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I’m found
Was blind but now I see!*

Living Electronic Billboards for the New World

Listen you’ve been called out of this world by the resurrection of Christ for a purpose. This is God’s purpose: to set people aside from other uses so that they can be signposts to this new

² Clement of Alexandria. As quoted by Bray, G. (2000). *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude* (p. 68). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

reality, this new world. The new world has in fact already come into being through the life, death and **resurrection** of Jesus the Messiah. Through that sacrificial death on the one hand and the indwelling of God's **spirit** on the other hand, God has set people apart to be living electronic billboards of this new world.³

Praise God for Transforming Your Heart!

The believers Peter is writing to are suffering, yet he says, "Bless God! The God who changed your life should be praised and adored and worshipped! "Blessed be... God!!!" Praise Him!

No matter what you are going through, bless Him for your transformed life.

Bless God for He Caused You to Be Born Again

Peter encourages his readers to praise God, a helpful remedy for hearts weighed down with discouragement because of suffering. He then lists the reason for praise: *By his great mercy we have been **born anew***. The word for 'born again (*anagennaō*) has a more active sense than our translation (ESV) indicates, for the root word (*gennaō*) often refers to a father's role in the birth of a child. In blessing God, Peter thinks first of the new spiritual life that God has given to his people. Let's bless Him for it!⁴

Share Your Testimony

One of the best things you can do is get your eyes off yourself. That's what resurrection power is all about. It's about helping those who are hurting around you. No matter how much you are hurting, you have the promise that your pain will end. God will wipe away all tears.

Many don't have that hope of the resurrection. I want to fervently urge you to share your faith. Share what God has done for you! Bless the One who has given you a Living Hope!!

Because of Jesus' resurrection all Christians have the hope of:

II. An Inheritance after our Journey, vs. 4

1 Peter 1:4, "Born again... to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."

Future Share in the Kingdom

The New Testament regularly uses 'inheritance' (*klēronomia*) to refer not only to an earthly inheritance but also to a believer's 'share' in the heavenly kingdom, his or her future heavenly reward.⁵

The Inauguration of a Whole New World

God has, through the resurrection, inaugurated a whole new world. At the moment it is being kept safe, out of sight, behind the thin **invisible curtain** which separates our world (earth) from God's world (**heaven**). But one day the curtain will be drawn back; and then the '**incorruptible inheritance**', at present being kept safe in heaven, will be merged with our

³ Wright, 50.

⁴ Grudem, W. A. (1988). *1 Peter: an introduction and commentary* (Vol. 17, pp. 59–60). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

earthly reality, transforming it and soaking it through with God's presence, love and mercy (verse 4). And if that new world is kept safe for us, Peter assures us that we are being kept safe for it.⁶

Imperishable

Our stake in the future kingdom is not subject to decay. It is unable to be worn out with the passage of time. The New Testament uses this word only of eternal heavenly realities, such as God **himself** (Rom. 1:23; 1 Tim. 1:17), God's **word** (1 Pet. 1:23), and our **resurrection bodies** (1 Cor. 15:52; cf. 1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Pet. 3:4).

All earthly possessions will ultimately decay and be destroyed (Luke 12:33; Rom. 1:23; 2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 2:22; 1 Pet. 1:18), for the creation now is in 'bondage to decay' (Rom. 8:21).⁷

Undefiled

Peter invites contemplation of a heavenly inheritance **unpolluted** by even our own sin and containing nothing unworthy of God's full approval.⁸ Our place in God's kingdom is secured by Christ alone! It is undefiled because it is secured by Christ's unfailing and perfect righteousness. Because you are robed in His righteousness, you are completely worthy in Christ of that undefiled inheritance! You are unpolluted in Christ!

Unfading

Peter next describes our inheritance as "unfading"—that which is not subject to fading or decay. Unlike earthly wealth (Jas 1:11), it will never wither, grow dim, or lose its beauty or glory (cf. 1 Pet. 5:4).⁹

Having come to middle age, I am learning that the human body fades. Presently mine is falling fast into a state of decay. Gravity is taking over. My skin is no longer taut. The inevitable descent toward the earth from which it came is noticeably underway.

In contrast, the inheritance toward which Christians are said to be moving is said to be "unfading." It will never be subject to decay. What good news! When our own bodies, long since expired, are reunited with Christ on that final day, we will be made incorruptible forevermore, restored, new, complete. This is the inheritance that awaits all who are in Christ.¹⁰

Kept in Heaven for You

The form of the verb 'kept' (perfect passive participle) indicates a completed past activity (by God) with results that are still continuing in the present: God himself has 'stored up' or 'reserved' this inheritance in heaven for believers and it continues to be there, 'still reserved' for them.¹¹

Christians possess some of the benefits of salvation in this life, but the great fullness of redemption is yet to come. God has promised unfathomable glories in the eternal perfection of heaven that will one day be the conscious experience of every believer¹²

⁶ Wright, 50-51

⁷ Grudem, 62.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Helm, D. R. (2008). *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: sharing christ's sufferings* (pp. 34–35). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

¹⁰ Grudem, *ibid.*

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2004). *1 Peter* (p. 38). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

III. **God's Power** on the Journey, vs. 5

Jesus is risen from the dead, and it makes all the difference.

1 **Peter 1:5**, you are chosen born again exiles, “who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Guarded: Safe from Self and Satan

Guarded (*phroureō*) means ‘kept safe, carefully watched’, and is frequently used in military contexts.

The word can mean both ‘kept from escaping’ and ‘protected from attack’, and perhaps both kinds of guarding are intended here: God is preserving believers from escaping out of his kingdom, and he is protecting them from external attacks.¹³

Ephesians 2:1-3 says we used to be enslaved to self, Satan, and the world. Now we are safe from those old enemies, even our own fleshly, sinful nature.

No one is able to pluck us out of the Father's hand! Even our own selves!

Jude 1:24-25, says it so well, “Now to him who is able to keep [guard or imprison] you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

You are imprisoned by the power of God from falling away!

Grace Empowered Faith

I love how Peter says we are “guarded through faith” in verse 5. The present participle, which Peter uses, gives the sense ‘you are continually being guarded’. He stresses that this is *by God's power*. Wayne Grudem says of this verse: “God's power in fact energizes and continually sustains individual, personal faith.”¹⁴

This mystery is expressed in **Philippians 2:12-13**, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” We might call this “grace empowered faith.”

It is God's power that is illumining our minds and strengthening our faith. We love Him because He first loved us. We came to Him because He drew us to Himself by His Spirit. We are kept by the power of God, which is a fountain for our faith. We might say we are kept by the grace, or power of God. In other words, it is the grace that empowers and enlightens our faith to understand who God is. It is God graciously revealing Himself to us that empowers our faith.

God's Power is Not a Mere Force

You must understand that God's power is not a mere force. God is a person. So your faith is going to be empowered by His presence. The Holy Spirit ministers to us that power, as he said in verse 2 – through sanctifying us. He is with us! This is the resurrection power of Jesus! Because of that resurrection power, the very Risen Christ walks with us and talks with us, and daily empowers us!

¹³ Grudem, 63.

¹⁴ Ibid.

IV. **Joy** in the Journey, vs. 6-9

1 Peter 1:6-9, “In this [our future hope] you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Rejoicing in Future Hope

The word *this* in the phrase *In this you rejoice* is best understood to refer to the entire future hope discussed in verses 3 to 5. This is not all there is!

When they think about their future inheritance, the Christians to whom Peter is writing respond with intense ‘salvation joy’ which continues throughout their earthly lives. He thinks such rejoicing in heavenly realities to be a normal part of the ordinary Christian life.¹⁵

Growing and Changing

Verse 7, “⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire.” Here we see the purpose of all your trials. It is that you might be growing and changing in Christ, which is the final result of your faith.

Deep Suffering

Peter says we have “inexpressible joy” while we are going through deep suffering. One poet, William Blake put it this way:

*Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine,
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for joy and woe;
And when this we rightly know,
Through the world we safely go.¹⁶*

May Joy Rise in your Heart

May joy rise in your heart, for various trials are producing within you the outcome of your faith, nothing less than the salvation of your soul.

Personal Fellowship with the Risen Christ

Verse 8, “Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.”

Though Christians **do not see Him now**, still they **believe in Him**. Jesus told Thomas, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet

¹⁵ Grudem, 66.

¹⁶ William Blake, *Auguries of Innocence*, quoted in R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), p. 179.

believed” (John 20:29; cf. Heb. 11:1). Faith accepts the revealed, written record of Jesus Christ (the Gospels; 2 Tim. 3:15; cf. 2 Chron. 20:20; Acts 24:14), which portrays Him in all His glory and leads believers to love Him (cf. Heb. 11:6).¹⁷

Joy Unspeakable

The fellowship with the Risen Christ we enjoy is beyond words. That wondrous relationship caused Peter’s readers to **greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory**. **Inexpressible** (*aneklalētō*) literally means “higher than speech.” Those who live in personal communion with Christ experience a **joy** so divine that they cannot communicate it¹⁸

We Lose Nothing, but Gain Everything in Suffering

We lose nothing by our suffering. Instead we gain more fellowship with Christ. There is really no reason for believers to lose their joy when they can tap into all the present and future spiritual realities mentioned in this passage—present proven faith, fellowship with Christ, and deliverance; and a protected future inheritance and promised honor.¹⁹

V. A Privileged Journey, vs. 10-12

1 Peter 1:10-12, “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

The Study of the OT Prophets

The focus of the Old Testament prophets’ intense study in trying to comprehend the person and work of Christ was centered on **the grace that would come** to sinners through Him. Salvation concerns primarily the divine act of saving sinners.²⁰

The Theme of the Old Testament Prophecies

The overall theme of those prophecies was twofold: **the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow**. The Old Testament refers to **the sufferings of Christ** in such passages as Psalm 22:1–31; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:24–26; and Zechariah 12:10; 13:7 (cf. Ps. 89:24–37; Luke 24:25–27; Rev. 19:10). **The glories to follow**, including such truths as the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Christ, appear in passages like Isaiah 9:6–7; Isaiah 53, Daniel 2:44; 7:13–14; and Zechariah 2:10–13; 14:16–17.²¹

¹⁷ MacArthur, 47.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Angels Involvement in God's Redemptive Plan

It is not that the angels have been uninvolved in God's plan of salvation. They announced Christ's birth (Luke 1:26–35; 2:10–14), ministered to Him during His times of testing (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43), stood by the grave when He arose from the dead (Matt. 28:5–7; Mark 16:4–7; Luke 24:4–7), attended His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:10–11), and now serve Him by ministering to all believers (3:22; Heb. 1:14). God has made His angels witnesses to what occurs in the body of Christ. They rejoice and praise God whenever He saves a sinner (Luke 15:7, 10). They were watching the apostle Paul and the other apostles (1 Cor. 4:9). God continues to put His saving grace on display before the angels.²²

Things Which Angels Long to Look

What a privilege! We have a greater revelation than the Old Testament prophets and even the angels. It says "angels long to look" on what we are experiencing!

VI. A Messy, but Victorious Journey, vs. 13-16

1 Peter 1:13-16, "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."¹⁴ 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."

Verse 21: "through him [Christ] are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

The victory is promised!

Gird Up the Loins of Your Mind

The command to "prepare our minds for action" is literally to "gird up the loins of our mind." Today it is a funny way of speaking. But in Peter's day, men wore **long robes** that hindered them if they needed to run. This was the ancient Oriental custom of gathering up one's long robes by pulling them between the legs and then wrapping and tying them around the waist, so as to prepare for running, fast walking, or other strenuous activity (see 1 Kgs 18:46; 2 Kgs 4:29; 9:1)²³

Their robes could easily get caught on a rock or a briar bush. To prevent that, they would need to "gird up the loins" of their robe so they could travel unhindered.

In the same way, our thoughts are often flying loose into places that can hinder our walk with Christ. We have the temptation to live according to our former life style. We need to "gird up the loins" of our mind and live seriously in the light of the Word of God!

Be Sober - Alert

Are you sober minded and alert for the battle that waits for you every day? The command to "Be sober" forbids not only physical drunkenness but also (since the phrases before and after have to do with attitudes of mind) letting the mind wander into any other kind of mental

²² MacArthur, 58.

²³ Grudem, 80-81

intoxication or addiction which inhibits spiritual alertness, or any laziness of mind which lulls Christians into sin through carelessness.²⁴

Set Your Hope

Verse 13, "...set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." "Set your hope fully" is not simply the vague sense of 'wish for' or 'dream about'. It conveys a sense of confident expectation!

The call for struggling Christians is this: set your hope fully on the future coming of Christ.²⁵ There is a grace that will be brought to you in that moment!

How Do We "Set Our Hope" on Christ?

A Healthy Mind

Verse 13 - we need a healthy, renewed mind. God calls you to think Christian! You cannot just coast through life.

2 Peter 1:3, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him [in the Word] who called us to his own glory and excellence."

How do we know what we know about God? He has revealed Himself in His Word! Renew your mind. You can't just do anything you want with your body and your mind. Your body and mind belong to God.

God has something to say about

- how you relate with your family,
- how you relate with government,
- how you should spend your time
- what you should think about

Holy Living

Verse 14-16 - we need holy living! **1 Peter 1:14-16**, "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."

Christianity is not just about having right doctrine. It is ultimately about right living. Though we are not saved by good works, we should be zealous about good works. God has "prepared them beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

The Risen Christ Lives in Us!

Holy conduct is the distinguishing mark of those who set their hope on the grace to be revealed at Christ's coming. When we live lives that are modeled on God's holy character, we demonstrate that we have internalized the call to set our hope on our eternal inheritance.

If the risen Christ dwells in us, then we are His hands, His feet, and His heart!

What about Sin?

Conversely, whenever we find ourselves trapped and enslaved to sin—when all we can do is continue grasping for the pleasures of the world—we reveal to the world, and to God, that we place **too little value on the grace** that is to be ours with the coming of Christ.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid, 81.

²⁵ Helm, 57.

²⁶ Ibid.

True Holiness - a Negative Aspect

Please don't misunderstand. We sin every day. But because of the risen Christ, we have a new relationship with sin. We hate what we once loved.

True holiness has a negative aspect. **1 Peter 1:14**, "do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance!"

It is experienced when believers are **not** being **conformed to the former lusts**. **Conformed** means "to be shaped by" or "fashioned after" (cf. Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:20–24). The **lusts** that characterized that former life include sinful desires and thoughts, evil longings, uncontrolled appetites, sensual impulses, and all other unrighteous motivations and urges that compel the unregenerate (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Gal. 5:19–24; Eph. 5:3–5; 1 Thess. 4:4–5).²⁷

We ought to put off the old habits every day. Sometimes those old habits come back. You're going to have to do all you can to put them off. Christ will never abandon you. His grace is daily empowering you. His Spirit is daily guiding you. He will not let you go!

The Battle Spelled Out: Keep in Step with the Spirit

Look at the battle we have every day for holiness. **Galatians 5:17-25**, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

A Military Term

To "keep in step" is a military term. Let the One with highest rank guide you. Let Him have the control and the honor in your heart. Does the Spirit have highest rank in your heart?

Is Christ risen in you? Then you who have the Spirit should be controlled and filled by the Spirit. Let the Spirit take over. Drink Him in! Drink in His Word. Drink in His love. Drink in the resurrection power of Jesus. Live in the Spirit! Walk in the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead!

Holiness - the Positive Aspect

We are going to struggle. We are going to fail in some way each day. But the passion etched on our heart are these words of the Risen Christ: "Be Holy, for I the LORD am Holy!" (Lev. 11:44).

Yet our holiness has a positive aspect. **Verse 15**, "be holy in all your conduct..." We are to **be holy ... in all our behavior**. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus set forth this same standard, "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48; cf. Eph. 5:1). In this life believers **cannot be sinless** (cf. Rom. 7:14–25; 1 John 1:8) as God is, but no less than His holiness is the goal at which they are, equipped by the Word and the Spirit, to

²⁷ MacArthur, 66.

aim (Eph. 2:10).²⁸ We as true Christians hunger and thirst for righteousness, and we will be filled.

There is a Battle, but we are Victorious

Every day is a battle. You are going to fail. If there is sin in your life that you can't seem to get victory over, then look for pride. Pride is what brought Satan down. Pride will bring you down. Humble yourself. Get help. If you are a man, find a brother. If you are a woman, find a sister. If you don't have a "confessor" then how are you going to live victoriously? You ought to have an older brother or sister in the faith that you can go to. Everyone of us needs that.

But we ultimately need to grow personally in our walk with the Lord. He is our ultimate accountability.

But who's side are we on? The Christ who defeated sin and death and hell dwells within us! He is the victor! He will keep us in His holiness!

Athanasius Quote

Brothers and sisters, no longer is sin victorious! No longer can death have the victory over us. Athanasius of Alexandria said in 373 AD,

"From Adam to Moses death reigned; but the presence of the Word [Jesus] abolished death. No longer in Adam are we all dying. In Christ we are all reviving."

In Christ we are ALIVE!! We are REVIVING!

Conclusion

2000 years ago, Satan thought he had won. Christ died and was buried. The disciples were scattered. They were confused and bewildered. They hid in fear. That was Friday, but Sunday arrived.

Jesus Christ is no longer in the grave. Death has no sting. Hell has no victory! Jesus Christ is risen from the dead! He's alive! He's alive! Hallelujah He's alive!!

²⁸ Ibid., 67.