
The Transforming Power of Faith's Expectation

1 Peter 1:13-21

Introduction How does what you hope for change and transform your life?

Think about:

How hoping for and anticipating a state championship changes a team.

How hoping for a promotion changes the way you work.

How hoping for a good retirement changes how you save.

The common theme in all of these is that hoping for something greater later enables and energizes significant sacrifice and pain now. Your hope changes your conduct now.

Context You have the gospel preached (v.12,25).
➡ Prophets desired to know it
➡ Angels desired to look into it

Content The suffering of Christ and the glory to follow.

Consequence Set your hope on **future grace** so that your faith and hope are in **God Himself**. (v.13,21)

So we turn from *The Salvation of God's People (1:1-12)*
to *The Transformation of God's People (1:13-2:12)*

What are you hoping for? Think together of all the things we hope for in this life. What about in the life to come? How does what you believe and hope in transform you now?

By the Call to Persevering Faith

(v.13)

How do we approach this subject of the suffering of Christ and the glory that follows? Do we realize what is at stake in our lives? The opening word here connects us to the afflictions proving our faith and now turns us to the hope purifying our faith.

The Preparation Required

We need to prepare ourselves mentally. Sluggish minds will make for sagging souls. So we are to prepare our minds for action. We need to be ready to think deeply about these things. Pleasing God in the midst of afflictions relying by faith on God's grace is not a simple formula. It requires a diligent application of our mind so that what we believe and desire is framed by the Word and focused by God.

We need to prepare ourselves seriously. Silly minds will make for shallow souls. So, we are to be sober about the serious things. We need to be serious, sober, impressed with the weightiness of these things. Pleasing God in the midst of afflictions requires a serious attitude, not toward the affliction, but towards God and His purposes in it.

The Patience Commanded

We then are to take our sluggish and silly minds and through diligent effort to focus our faith. Authentic and proven faith has a patient and expectant attitude. This is borne out by Paul and by the book of Hebrews. Genuine, affliction purified faith can wait until glory to receive what is promised. So then, we are to completely set our hope on the grace that is coming, particularly that glorifying grace at Christ's coming. Genuine faith then is not demanding that God move immediately. It is willing to wait for the purposes of God and the promises of God to reach fulfillment.

Two important ideas are embedded in this.

The focus of faith is on God - our coming to Him and finding our whole satisfaction in Him, embracing Christ for all that God is to us in Him. What we have in salvation is not primarily escape from hell (we do), or gaining heaven (we do), but rather, we have God.

The faith that believes is motivated by looking in the Word and anticipating the grace of God for the next moment as those moments stretch out into the horizon of eternity. In other words, faith now gets the next moment of grace for the next moment of need. All those moments then will stretch out until the Lord's return. But this kind of faith is not myopically focused on the gravel in the path at our feet. Rather it trusts for this next step because its hope sees a grace-path leading back from heaven.

What does this mean? In the midst of the mess, how do we read, understand and apply this text without getting bogged down (and yes, for many including me, it bogs down sometimes) in the esoterics of Jonathan Edwards and John Piper's

theology? It is just simply this. God gives you His enabling grace through faith. God has interpreted your situation for you in His Word and has given you sure and certain promises to be believed. The affliction you are experiencing is both how God tests your faith and is the situation for which you need grace. But believing God right now may not get what God has promised in your situation until Jesus returns in glory.

How do we know if we have this hope in future grace? What can we expect to flow from it?

In our Conduct as God's Children (v.14-17)

How does having a hope in future grace affect us? The primary affect of future grace is a present holy life. That is what this paragraph is all about. That we are children in God's family and exiles away from home illuminate our responsibilities in the midst of the mess.

Be Holy in our Actions (v. 14-16)

Conduct yourself with holiness not conformed to the passions of your old life.

In a wonderful comparison, we are to be obedient children. In the context, we have been born into God's family. We are now his sons and daughters. Since we are his children we ought to live up to the family name and Father's reputation. This conduct in holiness is as obedient children. Often, we must prepare our minds and hearts to be obedient.

We are not to be confirmed by the kind of people we used to be. Then we were driven by our old desires. Then we were ignorant, therefore needing to know (v. 18). Then we were driven by our passions, our lust for power, wealth, sex, recognition, significance, self-gratification. Some of those old passions were evil in themselves. Some were enslavements. But we cannot continue to be shaped by them and be obedient children.

Our holiness is wrapped up in God; He who has called us and He whose character is the reasons for our holiness. Notice that this is not a call to be holy in the same way that God is holy. Here in verses 15 and 16, God's holiness is the reason we are to be holy. Be holy because God is. Be holy for God is holy because the scriptures say so. Leviticus 11:44 is cited as the proof of the holiness of God. Why this verse? There God identifies Himself as the God of His people who has brought them up out of Egypt. Egypt is a type of our old self, the old man we used to be where we were controlled by sinful passions and lusts. In the wilderness and in the exile, the holy God was doing the work of seeing whether we would obey Him from the heart.

Be Reverent in our Attitude (v. 17)

Conduct yourself with fear calling on the Father as the one to whom we are accountable.

Peter has called us to holiness as children, now he calls us to fear and reverence for our Father. The “if” here has the force of “since”. He is not raising a question of whether we call on God or whether we recognize Him as a deliberating and rewarding Father. The sense of it is, since you do then you should; since you do call on God then you should respect Him in this way. Reverencing God is a necessary attitude for holy conduct.

What is Peter thinking of when he speaks of fearing God? He has in mind that we are accountable to God. Genuine faith focused on God’s promises and with hope set on future grace recognizes that God sees and evaluates all we do. We live before His face. Therefore, we have a reverential fear of God. We live knowing that we will give an account. Yes, He is our father and we his children. So, He will chasten and correct as a holy God, a wise and loving father and as a fair judge.

Finally, Peter reminds us of our status as exiles. We are to conduct our lives with holiness and reverence for the whole of our time here as exiles. This reminds us that God does deal with His people just as He dealt with Israel and sent them into exile in Babylon. More importantly, the attitude we cultivate when we affirm that we are exiles here is rich and fertile soil in which to grow our holiness.

Cultivate a lifestyle marked by reverential awe of God? Is the *fear of the Lord* even a part of our theology? Not today. We are too entranced by the passing pleasures of our world than to be holy and happy pilgrims of heaven.

For the Centrality of God’s Son

(v.18-21)

What is the content of a proven and purified faith? What does the kind of faith that fastens hope to future grace, the grace that will be ours when Christ is revealed? That faith knows who Christ is and what He has done as the centerpiece of God’s delight and glory.

As Redeeming God’s People

(v. 18-19)

Jesus has ransomed us from our old futile way of life. This is an amazing reality. God through Christ has bought us out of the slavery of our old lives. The slave market was familiar to most people of Peter’s day. There, people who had been yanked out of the familiarity of their former lives were now on the auction block to the highest bidder. Jesus has purchased us and made us His servants, His slaves. The key element of this model is that He is now our master and we are to do His bidding.

The whole Bible sees this as being bought out of dire and dreadful circumstances. Sin and Satan were our masters who held us in vicious thralldom. This is the old futile way of life we lived under the Law and in sin. For the mixed Jewish and Gentile congregation he is writing to, this futile way of life would have been different things. For one, it would have the self-righteous life of Judaism. For the other, the pagan delights of the intellect or carnal degradations of the flesh. Most of us are coming to Christ out of one or the other of those as well. Some of us come out of religion which was often futile and frustrating. Some of you came out of deep and terrible sins. Some have just been saved out of mild and innocu-

ous but gently moral lives. Whatever our former slavery, whatever our former futile way of life, Jesus has bought us as His own.

But look at the greatness of the price. We are bought, not with silver or gold, but with the blood of Jesus. We are not bought with money, but with death. We are purchased, not with anything that perishes, but with what is precious. This contrast is the most powerful for Peter's line of argument. The afflictions that weigh so heavily on us, the trials that prove our faith are most easily endured when we remember this same contrast. The trial is in the world which is perishing; our hope is laid up in heaven where our treasure is. Remember, our treasures have a magnetic power to point our hearts towards them. When Jesus is precious to us, then all the rest that is perishing is OK, particularly when we are both children of our Father and exiles, strangers, wanderers far away from Father's home.

The whole point here is to stir up in the heart a treasuring of Christ. He poured out His life, His very life. It was not with things we treasure that we are redeemed, but by him whom we ought to treasure.

As Revealing God's Plan

(v. 20-21a)

We are being transformed when we recognize the redemptive plan of God in history. Jesus was loved with an intimate love before the world was made. He was at the center of God's delight and joy. But He was revealed, made manifest, in these last times to us. He came in the flesh, died on the cross, rose on the third day and ascended into heaven all as a part of God's eschatological plan. He began or inaugurated the last days. How do we know this? Because of the phrase, "who [God] raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory." Here again is the rhythm of God's plan. Suffering first, glory later.

But we are drawn to Christ, to embrace Him because God is sovereignly working out His Divine plan for our sake. A great price has been paid all in the accomplishment of a glorious plan. He has moved to cause us to believe. Those for whom the price was paid, those who were bought are then brought to believe by giving the gift of faith. It is through Christ that we are believers in God. So Christ is central in the redemptive plan of God.

As Resulting in God's Purpose

(v. 21b)

Notice then that purchase and this plan have a grand purpose. They were designed in such a way that our faith and hope are in God. This is the bookend of the text. It starts in verse 13 where we are to set our hope on the grace that will be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. God has worked out all the details of redemptive history and our own personal redemption so that our faith and hope are in God. Our faith is in God. The grace we receive comes from God. The glory we long await for is God. Our hope in heaven is God. So we may well suffer now and we will hope in God for His glory later.

We fix our hope on God:

Conclusion

Motivated by

The Holiness of God
Our Redemption by Christ

Focused on

A Revered Father - Holy and Just
A Revealed Christ - Redeemed and Resurrected

To the End that

Christ is magnified in our salvation
Christ is glorified in the Father's estimation.

Your Responsibilities by the Grace of God

Do not be shaped by your former lusts (v.14)

Conduct yourself in an attitude of reverential awe of God (v.17)

Fervently love outwardly from the heart (v.22)

Your Motivations in the Character of God

A Holy God who calls to holiness (v.15-16)

A Father who impartially judges (v.17)

Your Reasons by the Work of God

The redeeming work of God in Christ (v.18-19)

The modeling plan of God in Christ (v.20-21)

The regenerating power of God in Scripture (v.23-25)