

1 Peter 1:10-16

¹⁰As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things into which angels long to look.

¹³Therefore, prepare your mind for actions, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, ¹⁵but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; ¹⁶because it is written "You shall be holy for I am holy."

Let's begin with the first set of verses (v10-12). In this section of his letter, Peter is referring to the prophets of the Old Testament who acted as God's voice to the nation of Israel. The prophets would more often than not bring a message of warning concerning the coming consequences that would happen should Israel continue to stray from what God had said. The prophets also told of the coming Messiah. They prophesied of the Christ to come and that He would suffer on our behalf. What Peter is saying in v.10-12 is as the prophets sought after the person or time that Christ would come, it was made known to them that it would be for generations to come. In this instance, "you" refers not only to those who were around when Christ was on earth, but also for those who came after Christ left earth. He also points out that the way we have come to know who Christ is and what He has done is through the preaching of the gospel.

The next set of verses (v.13-16) begin with "Therefore" which means Peter's next statement deals directly with something that was just said. What is the "therefore" there for? What does it point back to? I'll leave this one for you to explore and figure out. After what was said earlier to which Peter is referring to, Peter feels it is time for a call to action. He tells us to prepare our minds for action, be sober minded and to fix our hope on the grace to come. This question comes to mind. What are we preparing for?

My inclination is to think that we need to be preparing for the suffering, distress and trials to come. Here is how I see that this verse applies to our actions in trials we are going to experience. First, during any trial we give some sort of response, some sort of action. A long line at the grocery store? We can choose to grumble and complain or wait it out patiently. Less money coming into the household? We can choose to retreat into depression and "poor me"

status or we can choose to take the steps to find ways to bring income back into the house. This principle can be applied to any situation. So again, there is first a point of action. Second, the action we choose usually depends largely on our state of mind. This is why I believe Peter tells us we must keep sober in spirit. Often times when we hear the word sober, we think of alcohol. While I have certain convictions about that, what Peter is saying goes well beyond alcohol or any other substance. The Greek for sober is *nēphontes* which bears the following meanings: not drunk or intoxicated, free from illusion (intoxicating influences of sin), have your wits about you, having presence of mind (clear judgment). Look at Romans 13:13 and Luke 21:34. It isn't all about being drunk. It is about keeping our whole spirit, or being, in check. As Peter points out in the next two verses, it is about being holy, obedient children of God.

Peter's call to action is followed by a description of how to act. First we are to be obedient children. Second we are to abstain from the lusts of our former selves. As mentioned in session 2, we have been born again. We are a new creation. We are to stay away and even run from our old ways of life. For further reading, read through Ephesians 4:22-24 and Romans 12:2. If you have a bit more time, I recommend reading through all of Ephesians 4. It has lots to say about not being conformed to the old self and to live a holy life. Living a holy life is Peter's third description of how to act. The call for God's children to be holy is not new to the New Testament. See the below references:

Lev. 11:44 - For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am Holy

Lev. 19:2 – Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

Lev. 20:7 – You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.

What does it mean to be holy? To be honest, this question has multiple correct answers. However, here we are called to be holy as God is holy. What makes God holy? An answer to this that would be consistent with everything else in this passage is that God has nothing to do with sin. God and sin are as separated as oil and water. There is no mixing the two. So what does that mean for us? We are to abstain and refrain from our old sinful ways. We should have no part in those things. To help elaborate this point, let's read Romans 8:12-16:

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God

This should inform us of how we are to act not only when things are good, but also when things aren't so good. Verse 15 tells us we are to be holy in ALL of our behavior. It is easy to do what we know is right when everything is going well. What about when the storms come? We often get bogged down by our circumstances and lose our focus. We begin to focus on the things happening around us instead on God and the glory to come. This is when we begin to act on our own accord which typically does not match up with what God wants us to do. We must be obedient children. We must consistently keep our focus on God if we are to find any hope in times of struggle.

Application Questions

- How important is it for us to “preach” (share) the gospel? Has this been made a priority in your life?
- How have you prepared yourself for the coming trials? What are things we can do or steps we can take to prepare ourselves for the trials to come?
- How did you react the last time a trial came knocking at your door? Was it in a manner that reflected God's holiness? If not, how can you do better?
- Have you been an “obedient child”? Is there something that God is trying to steer you away from?

Final Remark

I encourage you to take some time to do some self examination. I am talking about the kind of reflection that allows God to show you the depths of your heart. Only then will we learn where we are falling short and where we can grow.