

Session 2

June 14, 2020

THE EXPRESSION OF OUR HOPE

1 Peter 1:13-25

The contrast Peter points out between the old lifestyle and the new is one born of experience. Peter was the boisterous and often careless disciple of Jesus who was far too quick to speak and far too impatient to listen. But by the time he penned this epistle, his “bull in the china shop” persona had been tempered into a highly committed, highly disciplined, hope-filled demeanor befitting his pastoral role. His testimony is both exciting and humbling. While the apostle Paul was moved from anger to humility, Peter was moved from despair to hope. But *looking for* hope is not enough. Here, Peter stresses *living in* hope. Three requirements are mentioned.

A life of hope requires holiness (vv. 13-16). Our ultimate hope lies in the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to return for His own; a future event that is as much an act of God’s grace toward us as our initial salvation (v. 13). Peter uses three adjectives to describe the believer’s posture as we await His return. First are “minds ready for action.” The original is “girded up,” and the form of the verb indicates that it’s already been done. The idea here is to keep an alert, ready mind. Second, a “serious” outlook; that is, one with calm deliberation. Third, a hope “completely set” (or *firmly established*) in grace. Accompanying that appropriate mindset is the call for appropriate conduct. Old fleshly desires attributed to former ignorance are to be set aside (v. 14). After all, with the knowledge of Christ comes the knowledge of holiness. And with the knowledge of holiness comes the requirement for holiness. Moreover, just as believers are to set their minds on the blessed hope of *His appearance* (v. 13), so believers are to set their behavior of holiness by *His example* (v. 16).

A life of hope requires commitment (vv. 17-21). Looking to the blessed future does not negate the necessity of living in the not-so-blessed present. And although the believer’s sojourn on earth is temporary, it is still significant. The life of reverence (“fear;” v. 17) is motivated by four theological understandings. First, there is *recognition*; the One who we serve we also recognize as the One who judges everyone impartially. Second, there is *redemption*. Believers are His because He has redeemed us; having delivered us from the bondage of sin by the sacrificial blood of Jesus. Our third motivation for a life of reverence is *revelation*. Although Christ’s sacrificial death for us was predestined by the “determined purpose and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23), God also chose to reveal His plan to the church in both the person of Christ and the promise of Christ’s return (v. 20; see also Eph. 1:9, 10). Finally, the power of the *resurrection* (v. 21) serves as a reminder that the same power that brought Jesus back from the dead will bring Him back for the living.

A life of hope requires love (vv. 22-25). These verses are so tangled up with biblical instruction they can be hard to unravel. Obedience, truth, purity, love, salvation, and the word of God are all connected...and rightfully so. So what is the central truth? In situations like these, I find it helpful to ask those simple fact-finding questions of the text:

- Who? Believers awaiting Christ’s return
- What? Love one another earnestly (v. 22)

- When? Until Christ returns
- Where? Here on earth, during this sojourn
- Why? Because we have been born again through His word (v. 23)
- How do we love? In obedience, with pure hearts (v. 22)

It's worth noting that the source of all these things (obedience, truth, purity, love, salvation) is the word of God. For this reason, Peter finishes this section (and this chapter) by quoting an Old Testament tribute to the enduring nature of God's word (Is. 40:8). He then masterfully connects the Old Testament to the New: "And this is the word that was preached as the gospel to you" (v. 25).