

Group Study Guide

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

Living with Fear

I Peter 1:13-21

March 11, 2018

Main Point

There is something we should be afraid of having revealed about us...something that is the last thing we would want exposed. This morning, we will see what that should be.

Getting Started

The inheritance promised to followers of Christ should motivate them to set their hope entirely on their future reward and to live in fear of the God who redeemed them at the cost of his own blood. Think about it for a moment. This passage tells us to live in fear of God who redeemed us. How do we reconcile this admonition to fear with passages that tell us *not* to fear? Passages like Isaiah 41:10, 2 Timothy 1:7 and I John 4:18. What kind of fear does God have in mind in this passage in I Peter 1:17? How is that fear different than the kind of fear we should avoid having?

Observation

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 1:13-16.

What are some things the world expects us to place our hope in? How is Christ better than these things?

Why did Peter challenge his readers to set their hope fully on God's future grace in Christ? What shift in perspective does this cause for us?

The phrase "with your minds ready for action" could literally be translated "gird up the loins of your mind" and carries the idea of a man pulling up a long flowing robe so that he would be able to run freely without tripping. This tells us that setting our hope completely on the grace of Christ requires removing the things that distract us from wholehearted devotion to Him. Peter's readers—and people today—live in a world of constant distraction. We face pressure both inside and outside the church to conform to the ways of this world. To stand against them and be holy and different, we must be prepared.

*How do we get our minds ready to live as heavenly citizens in an earthly kingdom?
How is this a war that is waged on the battlefield of our minds?*

To prepare your mind for action means to fill your mind with truth so deeply that it transforms your choices, and thus your behavior. It is not enough to merely know the truth—the truth must become so ingrained in us that it affects our behavior. The main emphasis of v. 13 is on putting one’s hope wholly in the final consummation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Now, we enjoy only a beginning of that grace (cf. 1Jn 3:2-3). This longing for the unveiling of Jesus at His second coming permeates the New Testament. Additionally, setting your hope fully on Christ requires discipline. Studying God’s Word, praying, and actively participating in the community of the church are a few of the ways we can prepare our minds for action.

As opposed to “conforming to the desires of your former ignorance,” what does it mean “to be holy”?

How might remembering that Christ will one day return encourage us in our pursuit of holiness?

As Christians, we are living in an earthly kingdom but waiting for a heavenly one. As a result, we have been “born again to a living hope” and sealed for an “inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” (1 Peter 1:3-4). Yet we still have sinful desires that distract us from Christ (v. 14). Considering this, Peter not only reminds us of the salvation that is ours in Christ, but also challenges us to actively pursue holiness. The word “holy” literally means “set apart,” and it is most often used to refer to God’s perfect character. Christians are to demonstrate their eternal hope by daily seeking to grow in godliness.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 1:17-21.

What makes life as a temporary resident (v. 17) different than life as a permanent citizen? How does this identity affect our actions?

What are the advantages of seeing ourselves as temporary rather than permanent residents?

How has Jesus’ work of redemption freed us from an empty way of living? How should knowing that Christ died for us reshape the purpose of our lives (v. 21)?

Being a temporary resident doesn’t come with the comfort of being a permanent citizen. Aliens live with the tension of knowing their time is limited, so it puts a heightened level of importance and awareness on the time they spend in a foreign land. Christians should learn to see their time here as a stop rather than a destination.

Peter says that Christ was “foreknown before the foundation of the world but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory” (1 Pet. 1:20-21). The death of Christ was not simply a panicked, emergency, plan-B approach; nor was it an accident or twist of fate. The death of Christ (the ransom price) was planned before the cosmos appeared. Salvation was a plan made in eternity past but demonstrated through the

incarnation when Christ died and shed His blood on the cross. This tells us that Christ's work of redemption was God's eternal plan for us. Therefore, we can live with hope, secure in the knowledge that God loves us. Knowing that God saved us by His own power and plan should not only deepen our reverence for Him but also demonstrate His grace to the people around us.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 1:22-25.

How does the Word of God create a longing in our hearts for the hope of heaven? What role does Scripture play in helping us love others more fervently (1 Pet. 1:23-25)?

People are drawn into Christ by seeing the way that Christians love each other. How does our love for one another reveal Christ to others and bring glory to God?

The permanence of the Word is contrasted with the impermanence of people and vegetation. The focus of this section is the Word of God that endures or stands forever; it can never be made ineffective. It is an unchanging, vital, ever-present Word of truth. It meets people's needs, providing them with a sense of direction and wholeness. This is of crucial importance when everything around us seems to be coming apart. We continue to live holy lives, no matter what is going on around us.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How have your deeds recently revealed that you are trusting in Christ? Have there been times recently when your attitudes and actions revealed a lack of faith in Christ? If we are honest, we can all think of actions that show we are not trusting Christ as our life. But there's hope! When the Holy Spirit reveals sin in our lives, we can cling to the cross of Christ for forgiveness of sins and experience His resurrection life in us.

Where has Christ's call to holiness motivated you to action? How do you reconcile God's call for holiness with our own inability to live perfectly?

Why are we called together to proclaim the kingdom of God through the way we live for the sake of the world? How are we doing this as a group (or how can we)?

Have your beliefs transitioned into action? Why does the world need believers who act out what they believe?

Prayer

Thank God for redeeming us and allowing us to live a life filled with hope and holiness based on our new relationship with God. Pray that as we live, our community would be transformed by the holiness of God working through us.

Commentary

1 Peter 1:13-25

1:13-21. As resident aliens sojourning in this world, Christians are to live distinctively as those who belong to God.

1:13. The grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ refers to the culmination of God's redemptive activity in Jesus that will occur at His return (v. 5).

1:14. The phrase former ignorance means "without knowledge of God" and suggests that the recipients of this letter were mostly Gentiles who, before coming to Christ, practiced pagan religions.

1:15-16. God is the Christian's standard for holy living (Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7).

1:19. The metaphor of a lamb without defect or blemish points to Christ's sinlessness (Lv 22:19-25). He is the sacrificial Lamb of God (Jn 1:29; Rev 5).

1:20. The plan for Christ's sacrifice on behalf of sinners was fixed in eternity past, a sure reality set to unfold at a divinely appointed time in history (Gal 4:4).

1:22-25. Peter exhorted his readers to love their brothers (i.e., other believers; v. 22) as those who are born again through the living and enduring word of God, the gospel.