

I Peter: How to Be Holy
I Peter 2:13-5:14

Introduction:

- I. This morning we talked about our worth as people of God, what God paid for us, and as a result, what we should do in return (be holy as he is holy).
 - a. What we talked about this morning was hopefully enough to convince us that it is necessary for us to be holy, after what God has done for us.
 - i. He used the lives of dozens of prophets to tell the world that he would save us.
 - ii. He sent his son to die in order to save us.
 - iii. He inspired writers to write the Scriptures in order to allow us to know what we are to do to be saved.
 - iv. All of this is for *us*, not for him.
 - b. However, we discussed briefly earlier that it is not enough just to say, “Be holy.”
 - i. We do not use this word in our everyday life. Therefore we often have trouble understanding this concept.
 - ii. What are some *practical* ways I can be holy?
 - iii. What are some *practical* things I can do to show the world the holiness of God?
- II. This is what we are studying today.
 - a. I hope that you will notice a common thread among these practical matters.
 - b. I even desire more that you have already applied these things to your lives.

Discussion:

- a. How are we to show this generation that we are pure and holy, the children of God?
 - i. 2:13-14 – Be subject to human institutions (governments, laws, etc.)
 - 1. Compare with Romans 13:1-7:
 - a. Submit to the governments, that you may be approved for doing good, lest you be punished for doing evil, both by God and government (remember grade school).
 - b. Illegal downloading of music, cheating taxes, speeding, and other *little* laws are not to be broken because no one cares. God has *commanded* that we keep the law. Remember what happened when Israel disobeyed the law.
 - c. This does not only apply to the law (which is of first priority), it also applies to taxes, both direct (tribute) and indirect (customs).
 - d. This applies to honor as well. This submission is a part of the Christian life that needs to be accepted.
 - 2. Fear God, using our freedom as citizens of earthly country and heavenly country to serve God, and thereby silencing those who would speak evil of us.
 - 3. Honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the emperor.

4. Be submissive to earthly masters, bosses, etc., no matter if they are always fair.
 - a. It is gracious when one who is mindful of God endures sorrows and afflictions that are unjustly afflicted.
 - b. If we sin or break the law and are punished, what good comes out of it? It is debt (Romans 4). However, when we get what we do not deserve, it is a gracious thing (gracious to God when we endure unjust suffering, and gracious to us, when he suffers unjustly, i.e. Christ).
 - i. Because Christ suffered, leaving an example, we will.
 1. We should commit no sin, we should not deceive, we should not return evil for evil, we should not threaten when we suffer, but go to the judge who will bring justice.
 - a. cf. Matthew 5:38-48
 - i. Do not *resist evil*.
 - ii. Love your enemies.
 - b. Do not judge, go to the judge (7:1-2).
 - i. They will likely fight us the way we fight them. If they are unfair, however, God, who gave them power, will judge them.
 - ii. He died, that we might die to sin and be made righteous.
- ii. Wives be submissive.
 1. This is an unfortunate chapter break. This is another way that we are to show this world that we are pure and belong to God.
 2. This again is to be unconditional of the husband's faithfulness to God and his unfairness to her. She is to see him with respect either way.
 - a. Do you see a connection with the previous command? Do the right thing *no matter what*.
- iii. Husbands be understanding of wives.
 1. Wives are to inherit the same glory as husbands, and husbands should not use their God-given authority to be overbearing on their wives. Sure, God has placed them under our authority, but she is God's daughter. We need to be careful of how we treat God's daughters.
 2. Notice that to be *understanding*, one must defer authority to someone else!
 - a. Have you ever wondered why many places say "wives submit to your husbands" and "husbands love your wives," but Ephesians 5 says "submit to one another?"
 - i. This was brought to my attention this weekend, that God's model of the marriage relationship is God, Husband, Wife, Husband.
 - ii. The husband has authority over the wife, but he is also to submit to her.

- iii. Do you remember how Christ showed his greatness and deity? He washed the disciples feet, he allowed himself to be illegally tried and executed.
 - 1. He is our *master*, yet he is our *servant*.
 - 2. That is how a husband is to love his wife.
 - iv. Have a unity of mind.
 - 1. We are to be unified in our godly attributes (sympathy, brotherly love, tenderness of heart, humility, blessing rather than cursing)
 - a. By doing this, we are allowing God to be the one who brings justice. If we always bring justice to our lives, where does God fit in to bring justice? We are leaving him out of the picture.
 - 2. If we do good, we have no reason to fear evil. But even if we do receive evil, we will be blessed, because we are God's pure people.
 - 3. We look to Christ as being a holy example (we are holy because he is holy). Therefore we are to keep ourselves from doing evil.
 - 4. We need to have a reason to believe that we can tell others of our purity without them exposing our dirty secrets. If we have no dirty secrets, they cannot deny our purity, and they will be put to shame for making us suffer.
 - a. It is therefore better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
 - b. Christ suffered unjustly, that he might be able to ransom us and bring us to God.
 - i. His death was a message to those who were disobedient to God in the days of Noah, as a little reminder, that obedience brings salvation.
 - 1. As Noah and his family obeyed unto the saving of his family, we too can obey by being baptized, unto our own salvation in Jesus Christ.
 - a. This washing is not a physical cleansing or purifying, but a spiritual (and mental) purification.
 - ii. Also, since he suffered unjustly, we need to be prepared for the same thing.
 - 1. If anything, our unjust suffering should cause us to become more pure, to increase our detesting of evil, and thus to bring us farther from sin, toward more holiness (Remember that gold is refined by fire and testing, and its purity can only be tested and brought about by that fire). If we are to be more pure and holy, we are going to have to endure our sufferings, and not use those sufferings as an excuse to slip up once in a while.
2. Final Instructions
 - a. We need to be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of our prayers.

- i. We are to take holiness and purity *seriously*. We cannot be satisfied with coming to church and occasionally inviting our friends to follow.
- b. We need to love one another earnestly, for it covers a multitude of sins.
 - i. This means that it *hides* these sins. Proverbs 10:11-12 may help us as we think about this. The righteous speaks a fountain of life, while the wicked conceals violence. Hatred *stirs up* strife, while love *hides* offenses.
 - 1. Love lets things go. It forgives and forgets.
 - 2. Love also *prevents* sins, and therefore *covers*, or takes care of, the future sins (Romans 13:8-9). If we act based on love, we will not offend one another.
- c. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.
- d. Use gifts to serve one another, as good stewards of God's grace.
 - i. This applies to abilities, money, and opportunities as well.
 - ii. Speak as by God's word.
 - iii. Serve as by God's strength.
 - iv. This is all to be to his glory, not ours.
- e. Be ready for trials
 - i. You are sharing Christ's sufferings.
 - ii. That is, if you are suffering because of Christ and not because of evil deeds.
- f. Church leaders need to make sure the church is ready.

Conclusion:

- I. Remember Proverbs 11:31 (Though only read this way in the LXX) – If the righteous is barely saved, what becomes of the ungodly and sinner?
 - a. Therefore we need to endure our sufferings while we concentrate on doing good and becoming more pure.