

Armagh Baptist Church Bible Studies
Wednesday 24th February 2010 – 8:00pm

1 Peter 1:13-17 – ‘This Hope Should Lead to Holiness’

Introduction

So far First Peter has been talking about this great salvation that God has provided for us. Last time you heard how it's so wonderful, that even the angels long to look into these things! (v.12). They can't experience God's salvation, because they've never fallen into sin - they can only marvel at it!

But we have experienced it – if we are saved!

OK – so you're saved? So where do you go from here?
Many a person seems to get saved, and then gets stuck!

They've got their ticket to heaven; their fire insurance policy from hell, and then they just seem to coast along until Jesus comes or calls!
Is that it? Is that all there's supposed to be to it?

Sometimes you might even be tempted to ask yourself, *'If I'm saved, and if heaven is such a wonderful place, and this world is not really my home and I'm just a passing through, then why doesn't God just take me on home now? What am I waiting around here for?'*

Is Salvation *'the be all and end all'* – or is it just the beginning of something?

So far in 1 Peter ch.1, Peter has been talking all about this Salvation, and the New Birth, and our Assurance of going to heaven – the first 12 verses have dealt with all of that.

But that's just the foundation! It's a very important foundation. And it was very important for us to spend time laying that good foundation over the past weeks - but what next? We're saved! But where do we go from here?

Well, it's time to start building something on top of this salvation foundation:

There's a 'therefore' at the beginning of v.13, so once again we need to ask, 'What's it there for?'

It means that what is about to follow is going to build on what has gone before. So salvation is not the end; it's only the beginning.

You're saved, yes, and you know you're saved, you've got assurance. That's good! You're going to heaven, yes, and you know you are!
But what about this bit in between?

What about this period of time you are now in, between getting saved and going to heaven. Between trusting in Christ for salvation, and that moment when you will see Jesus face to face and your salvation is complete, and your hope has become reality? What's this period in between for?
What are we saved for?

Well, Peter has already hinted at the answer back in v.2:

You've been chosen and called and saved by God...
*'for **obedience** to Jesus Christ, and **sprinkling** by his blood', and this is 'through the **sanctifying** work of the Spirit.'* (v.2)

In short, we are **saved to serve**; we are **saved to be holy**, and we are **saved to be distinct** (or different) from the world around us.
After all, we are *'God's elect'* and we are *'strangers in the world!'* (v.1)

Read 1 Peter 1 vs.13-17

Peter has been talking about our new and living **HOPE**.

Well John agrees with him when he wrote 1 John 3:3:

*'Everyone who has this **HOPE** in him **purifies** himself, just as **He is pure!**'*

In other words, this **Hope** we have in Christ, should lead us to **Holiness!**
If you believe God has saved you, if you believe you're going to heaven, then it should make a difference in your life here and now in-between-times, because you are called to live a holy life!

But people don't like to talk about being Holy and living Holy lives – Holiness conjures up the idea of solemn seriousness in their minds, so they think that getting too concerned about holiness will just spoil their fun!
Let's take a look at this subject of holiness tonight...

1. Why should you be Holy?

- Because God is Holy (vs.15-16).
To be holy, is to be God-like, it's to be godly.
- Because He's your Father, and you're His child (v.17)
The only proof of that is that we bear the family likeness: holiness.
- Because He will judge our work (v.17)
So live your life here reverently – and with respect to that Day.

2. How can you be Holy?

Well, we are saved by grace, let's never forget that, and we must always live the Christian life by grace, but this does take some effort on our part...

(Headings from Stuart Briscoe's *Holy Living in a Hostile World*). We need:

(i) A Well-Ordered Mind (v.13a)

'Therefore, prepare your minds for action' (NIV)

'Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind.' (AV)

The picture is of a soldier with a long flowing robe, preparing for battle. He would lift up the hems of his garment from between his legs and tuck it into the belt around his waist. He was now prepared for action. Able to run.

But the **mind** is the battle-field where any temptation is either won or lost. Our minds as Christians need to be so fed upon God's Word, even conditioned by God's Word, that they'll be well equipped at a moment's notice to do intelligent battle with the Devil in the moment of temptation.

(e.g. Jesus – Matthew 4:4,7,10).

(e.g. Joseph – He reasoned in his mind why he shouldn't commit adultery with Potiphar's wife in Genesis ch.39:6-10).

If you want to be holy switch your mind on to God's Word and God's standards, and stop trying to just muddle through by yourself!

(ii) A Well-Disciplined Life (v.13b)

'Be self-controlled' (NIV)

'Be sober' (AV)

If our **minds** are the seat of the battle, then our **wills** are the seat of our passions and desires.

To overcome old patterns of behaviour involving our passions and desires we need to be self-controlled. We need a well-disciplined life, to keep our desires under control.

Later in this Book Peter tells us why we need to be self-controlled:-

(4:7) – So we can pray. We need to be disciplined to take time to pray, so that we can then in turn keep our lives disciplined to be holy.

(5:8) – So we can defeat the devil. If we are not developing self-discipline and self-control through prayer, then we are going to be no match for the devil. Can you imagine being half asleep facing a roaring lion?

No, I'm sure you can't! If you were half asleep, a lion coming towards you would soon wake you up!

Likewise we need to be fully alert and self-controlled. The Devil is no joke!

(iii) A Well-Defined Goal (v.13c)

'Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.' (NIV)

'Hope to the End.' (AV)

If you want to lead a holy life, then live with eternity in view. 'Live in the light of Eternity.' Keep clearly in your mind that one day you are going to see Jesus, in all his holiness and glory. Not only that, but you're going to be held accountable for how you have lived your life as a believer (v.17).

Peter says 'Set your hope fully on this...'

This is in the aorist tense – it speaks of a clear-cut decisive action.

In other words your thinking goes like this:

You say to yourself, I'm going to see Jesus face to face one day, I'm going to give an account of myself to Him then. I don't want to be ashamed then, so in the meantime you *'make it your goal to please Him'* (2 Cor 5:9).

In other words, you have a well-defined goal in view, and you remind yourself of it often. That gives focus to your life, your attitudes & behaviour. Ask yourself something like this: *'If Jesus was to come back now and see me doing x, y or z, is this something that I would be ashamed of then?'*

(iv) A Well-Established Conversion (v.14-15)

'As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.' (NIV)

A conversion is a change. So is there really a change in your life? Does it really show? Are you any different from the unsaved around you now?

Because before you were saved you were *'children of disobedience'* just like the rest (according to Ephesians 2:2). Now Peter says you are to be *'obedient children'* – the exact opposite – that's a definite change people around you should notice. You used to *'live in ignorance'* of God and of His ways, now you have *'no excuse'*! (e.g. Romans 1:20, 2:1).

You used to *'conform to the evil desires you had'* and to the world around you. But now you are to be *'transformed, not conformed!'* (Romans 12:2).

Listen to Paul in Romans 12:2 from J.B. Phillips paraphrase:

'Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed.' (cf 1Peter 1:13)
The Message paraphrase puts it like this: *'Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, developing well-formed maturity in you!'*

Conclusion

Are you really 'converted' – changed from what you used to be like?

Are you really 'converted' from the behaviour of your peers around you now, even today, who are not saved?

Is there evidence of a well-established conversion in your life?

If we want to be holy, then these are 4 things that we need to attend to.

Salvation is only the beginning, not the end. God has saved us for a reason: He has called us to be Holy! (Hebrews 12:14-17) *'No holiness; No heaven.'*

