

**“As He Who Called You Is Holy,
You Also Be Holy In All Your Conduct”
I Peter 1:13-21**

Franklin Church of Christ Edwin Crozier April 18, 2004 PM Worship
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Introduction:

Perhaps you have heard the statement supposedly attributed to Mark Twain: “I am not bothered by the parts of the Bible that I do not understand. It is the parts of the Bible that I do understand that frighten me.” Recently, I have been studying what I think is the most frightening Bible passage—I **Peter 1:13-21**. Throughout the service today, we are going to focus our teaching, singing and prayers on the principles found in this passage.

Discussion:

- I. The goal: “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (**I Peter 1:15**).
 - A. *We are to be holy.* That is, we are to be separated from the worldly and sinful. We are to be devoted to the spiritual things of God. We are to be set apart for godly and spiritual work. As Paul wrote in **Romans 6:17-19**, while at one time we were slaves of sin and unrighteousness, leading to death, now we are to separate ourselves from that and devote our members as slaves to righteousness, leading to holiness and life eternal.
 - B. *We are to be holy as God is holy.* God is the standard for our holiness, not our former conduct, not our parents, not the people around us—God. How holy is that? Let us allow God to speak for Himself on the matter. Consider the following verses.
 1. “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” (**Revelation 4:8**).
 2. “And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the Lord spoke, saying: “By those who come near me I must be regarded as holy; before all the people I must be glorified”” (**Leviticus 10:3**).
 3. “Let them praise Your great and awesome name—He is holy ... Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool—He is holy ... Exalt the Lord Our God and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy” (**Psalms 99**).
 4. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (**James 1:17**).
 5. “No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God” (**I Samuel 2:2**).
 6. “So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the holy One in Israel” (**Ezekiel 39:7**).
 7. “They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship You, for your judgments have been manifested” (**Revelation 15:3-4**).
 8. “When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; ... I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them” (**Isaiah 1:12-15**).
 9. “But Joshua said to the people, ‘You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good” (**Joshua 24:19**).
 10. “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (**Isaiah 59:1-2**).
 11. “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” (**Isaiah 6:3**).
 - C. *We are to be holy as God is holy in all our conduct.* This refers to every aspect of our behavior. It involves the way we present ourselves and the way we carry ourselves. It speaks of how we dress, how we speak, how we sit, how we stand, where we go and what we do. The goal is not to do some holy things. The goal is to be holy like God at all times without exception.

- II. The reason: “Because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (**I Peter 1:16**).
- A. *Because God is holy.* Peter refers to a statement, forms of which are found repeatedly in **Leviticus (Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:26; 21:8)**. **Leviticus** delineated many of the laws of cleanliness before God and the sacrifices offered to make the people clean. Repeatedly, God said these things must be done because He is holy. Additionally, an interesting parallel is found in **Leviticus 21:1-8** as God explained the priests’ holiness. They were to be holy because a holy God sanctified them and because they were offering sacrifices to a holy God. According to **I Peter 2:5**, we are a royal priesthood, sanctified by God and offering up sacrifices to Him. Therefore, because He is holy, we must be holy.
 - B. *Because God’s holiness led Him to redeem us with the incorruptible blood of Christ (I Peter 1:18-19).* According to Paul in **Romans 3:21-26**, God’s righteousness, His holiness, is demonstrated by the fact that He sacrificed Jesus so He might not only be just, but a justifier. His holiness led Him to redeem us. But at what cost? The cost was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Paul also taught in **I Corinthians 6:20** that we have been bought with a price, that is redeemed by the blood of Jesus, therefore we must glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God’s. Once we become Christians we have been bought. We are not our own. We have sacrificed control over our lives to God, therefore, because we are His and He is holy, we must be incorruptible and holy in order to glorify God.
 - C. *Because God’s holiness demands that He judges each one impartially according to His work (I Peter 1:17).* God has bought us with a price. His grace has been extended and we are His children. But He is not going to be partial. We are not allowed to get away with anything simply because we are His children. His holiness still demands judgment for disobedience. We cannot continue in sin and expect to receive the salvation that is reserved for us by the power of God through faith (**I Peter 1:4-5**). As Peter said in his second letter in **II Peter 2:20-22**, when one who has escaped the pollution of the world returns back into it, the latter state is worse than the first. God’s holiness demands judgment and it is coming at a time when we least expect it, therefore we must conduct ourselves in holiness and godliness (**II Peter 3:11**).
- III. The way: “... as obedient children ...” (**I Peter 1:14**).
- A. *We must be redeemed by God (I Peter 1:18-21).* There is little I need to say regarding this. We have already discussed that we were bought with a price. But we do need to know that this redemption was God’s plan from the foundation of the world. The plan is that we be saved by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). Do not misconstrue anything I am saying today as claiming that we will be earning our salvation. It is too late for that. We have already fallen short of God’s glory (**Romans 3:23**). Because of our sins, Jesus died. But that death has not been granted to give justification for ungodly and unholy living. Rather, as Paul said in **Romans 6:1-2**, we are not to continue in sin, rather, we are to be dead to sin.
 - B. *If we will be holy as God is holy in all our conduct we must gird up the loins of our minds (I Peter 1:13).* We have to begin with the mind. When the ancients were in a hurry or about to take a trip, they would gird up their loins. That is, they gathered up their loose garments and tucked them in a belt at the waist so they could journey without impediment. This goes along with the metaphor he uses in **I Peter 2:11**, calling these Christians sojourners and pilgrims. We are on a journey in this life and so we must gird up our minds so that we will not be impeded. We are to bring every thought into captivity (**II Corinthians 10:5**). As Paul said in **Philippians 4:8**, we need to think about pure things, good things, lovely things, virtuous things, etc. Girding up the loins of our minds means we get rid of the impediments that can hinder our walk. As Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount, if something is causing us trouble, we need to cut it off and throw it from us (**Matthew 5:29-30**).
 - C. *If we will be holy as God is holy in all our conduct, we must be sober (I Peter 1:13).* That is, we must think soundly and reasonably. The command to be sober contains in it the prohibition of doing things that cloud our judgment. Consider a few examples: being distracted by worldly things, drinking alcohol, taking mind-altering drugs, evil companions, envy of sinners, etc. We are to be holy in all our conduct, we must, therefore be sober. Along with the command to be sober, we often find the plea to watch or be vigilant (**I Thessalonians 5:6-8; I Peter 5:8**). Sobriety and watchfulness are necessary because the devil wants us to have clouded judgment.

- D. *If we will be holy as God is holy in all our conduct, we must rest our hope fully on the grace that is to come at the revelation of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:13).* In **Romans 8:23-25**, Paul says we are saved in hope. That is, we became Christians because of eternity, not because of right now. This had special significance within the context of **I Peter**. Peter was writing to encourage the Christians to maintain their faithfulness despite the persecution and oppression they were facing. Thus, they needed to remember that their hope was not in physical protection from the magistrates of the common people. Their hope was in the grace that would come at the revelation of Jesus. For these Jewish Christians of Peter's day, that may well have had reference to the coming destruction of Jerusalem. But, the statement is applicable to us as we await the judgment of our enemies and the change of our bodies to immortality. We should focus our hope upon that. We should comfort ourselves with that [**I Thessalonians 4:13-18**]. Our hope should not be in riches, pleasures, power or fame. Our hope should not be in men, whether within or without Christ's church. Our hope must be focused on the goal of heaven, because that is the prize for which we strive [**Philippians 3:12-16**].
- E. *If we will be holy as God is holy in all our conduct, we must be different (I Peter 1:14).* Peter said we are to act as obedient children, not conformed to our former lusts. Later in **I Peter 4: 3**, Peter said we have already spent enough time living in the conduct of the Gentiles. He then lists some pretty obvious sins. We may be tempted to say, "I was brought up in the church and I never did any of those things. This point is not about me." However, remember what Paul said in **Ephesians 2:1-3**. We were all children of wrath following after the lusts of the flesh. The list in **I Peter 4:3** is not all-inclusive, but rather a representative list of sinfulness. Whether you were brought up in the church or not, whether you committed any of the "biggies" or not, you were a sinner and that has to stop. Paul wrote in **Romans 12:1-2**, that we are to transform our minds and not be conformed to the world. He also wrote in **Ephesians 4:17ff** that we are to put off the old man and put on the new man. We must change. If you have become a Christian and have not changed, then you are not being holy as God is holy.
- F. *If we will be holy as God is holy in all our conduct, we must conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear (I Peter 1:17).* It has become religiously incorrect to motivate people with fear today, stemming from a misunderstanding of **I John 4:18**, which passage we will study at a later time. For now, notice that Peter says if we are going to be holy, we must conduct ourselves in fear. This passage is frightening. It frightens me because I understand salvation by grace. I understand that I cannot earn salvation. But I understand from this passage and others that salvation is not just given to me apart from how I live. God expects me to live a holy life and the grace He has offered through His Son provides no license to sin. He is the impartial judge who is examining how we live our lives. And frankly, I am not sure we are making the cut. But it is this fear that pushes us forward to draw nearer to God, to become more like Him, because I do not think where I am now is enough like Him. As Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:12**, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. As Jesus said in **Matthew 10:28**, we do not need to fear those who can kill our bodies, but fear God who can kill our bodies and then cast us into hell. In **Psalms 145:19**, we learn that God will save those who fear Him when they cry out to Him. But some will say, we should not make people too afraid, because then they will be paralyzed and do nothing. Jesus spoke about this person in the Parable of the Minas in **Luke 19:20-23**. Here was a servant that was so afraid of the master that he did not do anything. Do you see what the master said? "Out of your own mouth I will judge you." Do not think that the plea that you knew you could not live up to the strict standards of our austere Master so you did not try will help you receive mercy in the judgment. God will judge you according to your own words. Realizing the standards of God and fearing them should cause you to do whatever you can, not cause you to say, "Oh well, too bad for me."

Conclusion:

In **Hebrews 12:14**, the Hebrew writer said that without holiness no one will see the Lord. As He who called us is holy, we must be holy in all our conduct. Not one of us is holy enough, we each must grow. Let us take seriously this charge, being in awe of God's holiness and striving to emulate it.