

Subject: *Living as God's Redeemed People*

Scripture: *1 Peter 1:17-21*

The first chapter of Peter's first letter focuses on two things: the rich blessings that believers have and the responsibilities we have as a result of our blessings. As Christ said, "To whom much is given, much is also required." Our text (vs. 17-21) is connected to what Peter said about living in obedience, holiness and the fear of God (vs. 13-16).

1. Living in the fear of God our Father

In verse 17, "if you call on the Father" means if you are a Christian. If you are a Christian "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." (NKJV) "Conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear." The word sojourning or stay can be translated "pilgrimage." Christians are living here in this world as temporary residents. What kind of fear is Peter talking about here? It is the fear of God.

By nature we do not fear God. *Romans 3:18* *There is no fear of God before their eyes.* But God opens our spiritual eyes and causes us to fear God and have a humble heart. We see this happen at the crucifixion of Christ with the two thieves crucified with Him. The gospels tell us that at first, both men cursed and insulted the Lord, but as time passed one thief had a change of heart that led to his salvation. One thief asked the other, "Don't you fear God?" When a person is saved, God gives him a new heart that fears God from that moment on. It's what Jeremiah said about the New Covenant.

Jeremiah 32:38-40 ³⁸ *And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:* ³⁹ *And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:* ⁴⁰ *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

At least two things are necessary if we are to live in the fear of God:

A. We must have a biblical understanding of God's character

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Proverbs 9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*

One of the fundamental truths about God is that He is holy. Peter has just emphasized that in verses 15-16. Be holy because the Lord your God is holy. By nature God is holy, and by nature we are sinners. That is our problem. But God makes provision for that by salvation and forgiveness. Remember the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6)? The prophet saw a vision of the Lord on His throne high and lifted up. He heard the angelic creatures crying back and forth, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty." Then Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me, for I am undone." One of the angels took a burning coal from the altar and purged his lips and his sin was forgiven.

In salvation we move from the fear of His holiness and judgment to an awe and reverence for His grace and mercy. *Psalms 130:3-4* ³ *If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* ⁴ *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*

In the words John Newton's song "Amazing Grace" we can say, "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved."

B. We must have an awareness of God's judgment

1 Peter 1:17 *And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*

Proverbs 15:3 *The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

Hebrews 9:27 *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

God will judge every man's work. We are not saved by works, but we are judged by works. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. But works is the evidence of real faith. James wrote, "Faith without works is dead, being alone."

Fearing God is a way of life for all believers. It's not a part-time thing; it's an all-time, and it's a lifelong thing. It's not just a Sunday thing; it's an everyday thing. Fearing God is something all OT and NT believers have in common.

Psalm 119:63 *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy commandments.*

Malachi 3:16 *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*

2. Living in the love of Christ our Redeemer

"Forasmuch as (because) you know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ..." This is the main thought of verses 18-19. Notice that our deep love and appreciation for Christ is based on our knowledge of Christ. And notice the contrast to the way we lived before salvation (vs. 14, "in your ignorance").

Since Peter speaks of their redemption without any explanation, we can assume these readers know what that meant. But we can't assume that everyone in the church now understands what is meant by redemption.

A. What does it mean to be redeemed?

The main idea of redemption is to be set free from bondage by payment of price (ransom). The OT concept of redemption is different, and has to do with the provision of a kinsman-redeemer, like we read about in the Book of Ruth. The kinsman-redeemer had the responsibility and privilege to care for a widow in the family when her husband died and she had no children to care for her. It was a matter of survival for the kinsman-redeemer to come to her rescue and become her provider and husband. In the NT, the idea of redeemer is based on the practice of slavery and the buying and selling of slaves. A slave owner could sell a slave in the slave market and the owner could either have him do work or set him free. Sometimes the slave would be sold by a harsh, wicked owner and he would be bought by good owner who treated him with dignity and kindness. This is the picture of redemption in the NT. Believers are enslaved to sin and they have been bought by a new master, even Jesus Christ.

B. How does Christ redeem sinners?

He died and shed His blood for us. Redemption comes at a high price (vs. 18-19), not with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ..." Peter uses the word "precious" several times in his letters. "Precious" means something of great cost, of high value. Peter refers to "precious faith" (1:7; 2 Pet. 1:1); "the precious cornerstone" who is Christ

(2:6-7); precious promises” (2 Pet. 1:4); and “the precious blood of Christ” (1:19), as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

This takes us back to the days of animal sacrifices when the priests offered the blood of lambs to make atonement for sin.

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.

Blood stands for life. Christ is the Lamb of God who poured out His life blood on the cross to make atonement for our soul. His blood was the price of our redemption. His blood was a ransom paid to set us free from sin’s curse and bondage.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Have you been to Jesus for His cleansing power, are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you washed, are you washed in the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb?

Do you rest each moment in the crucified, are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?