

## The Best Response – First Peter 1:13

### I. Introduction:

- A. Picture yourself on a walk to the park with your tiny, toy poodle. (It may take a lot of imagination.)
  - 1. Ahead you see a mother with a 6-year-old child, and the child is holding the leash of a 90lb. pit bull terrier.
    - a. The dog sees you and your dog, bearing its teeth, while the hair on its back begins to stand straight up.
    - b. He is obviously in either a defensive or aggressive mood.
    - c. Now the dog is beginning to lean toward you, pulling on the leash held by a small child.
  - 2. What are you to do?
  - 3. Unconsciously, your muscles tense and adrenalin pumps through your body preparing you for flight.
  - 4. Your eyes quickly glance around looking for the best escape route.
  - 5. And you hope that the woman behind the child can be quick enough to grab the leash and restrain the dog.
- B. Peter has been describing our walk to the park; to our Father's heavenly home.
  - 1. He has reminded us of some of the glorious aspects of our eternal salvation:
    - a. Election, sanctification, the grace of God, regeneration and an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled.
    - b. He has told us that our safety is guaranteed, because we are kept by the power of God through faith.
    - c. And that is in the light of the soon reappearing of our Saviour, in order that our faith *"might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the (apocalypse), the appearing of Jesus Christ."*
  - 2. Peter has also told us that God's salvation is so marvelous that even the prophets who first spoke of it, couldn't comprehend its depths.
  - 3. But then, as if we needed to be reminded, he tells us that we are still living in a world cursed by sin.
    - a. We may, in fact, be in the midst of a season of heaviness *"through manifold temptations."*
    - b. Our faith is being tried as we are staring down the muzzle of a 90 pound pit bull.
- C. What should be our response to this mixture of good and bad?
  - 1. *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*
  - 2. Notice that **verse 13** takes us back to all which precedes it by using that word *"wherefore."*
  - 3. What should we do? Peter tells us to ***gird ourselves***, get ***serious*** and ***strengthen our hope***.
  - 4. Or as I will put it this evening: ***enable, endeavor and encourage***.

### II. The first thing the apostle tells us is to **PREPARE** or **ENABLE** ourselves for our defense.

- A. *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end..."*
  - 1. Life throws stuff at us, and sometimes we have to adjust or adapt to those things.
  - 2. In Monday's 50 mph winds, I don't think I'd like to have been wearing a ***toupe***, an unsecured ***hat*** or a ***kilt***.
  - 3. But I ***did*** go out for a while after preparing for the assault of the wind, without a toupe, hat or kilt.
- B. **Peter** shares with us a common Biblical metaphor: *"gird up the loins of your mind."*
  - 1. As **Paul** was describing the **Christian's armor** in **Ephesians 6**, he said, *"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast plate of righteousness."*
  - 2. His idea was: **protect** yourself by **wrapping** yourself with the **truth of God**.
  - 3. In warning and preparing the disciples, the **Lord Jesus** said, *"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and (be) ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord..."*
  - 4. Twice God spoke to **Job** out of His whirlwind reprimanding him for his uncontrolled and ungodly thinking.
    - a. *"Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me."*
  - 5. The term *"gird"* is sometimes used metaphorically, but more than two dozen times it is entirely practical.
  - 6. And in a couple of cases, there is practical 21<sup>st</sup> century application.

C. For example God's instruction to Israel in regard to **the Passover** was:

1. Ye shall eat the Passover lamb in an unusual way: *"with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste."* Why?
2. Because this meal is to be taken in the light of your upcoming redemption; your departure from Egypt.
3. There are a lot of **Christians** who are **in fear** of the **dogs of war**; the dogs of **Satan**, the dogs of **chaos**.
4. But if they would just gird up their minds and live in the expectation of their imminent exodus, they'd be of more use, and glory, to their Redeemer.

D. Another case of girding, took place **after Elijah's victory** at the top of Mount Carmel.

1. The Lord had sent down fire from Heaven and consumed the prophet's water-drenched sacrifice.
2. Elijah then told Ahab to head for home, because the long, long drought was coming to an end.
3. And he told his servant to look off to the west for the cloud which was to bring the rain.
4. After the cloud was identified, *"the hand of Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezereel."*
5. We might apply that to girding up our minds, enabling us to run to the work God has given us.

E. **Peter specifically** tells us to gird up *"the loins of our MINDS."*

1. The reason he does is due to the fact that we are all prone to let our minds wander.
2. Not only when we should be listening to the sermon or the words of Christ, letting our minds wander,
  - a. but when we should set our affections on things above, we contemplate only the things on earth.
3. When we should be rejoicing in our eternal salvation and the upcoming revelation of the Saviour, all we can think about are the snarling dogs around us.
4. *"Gird up the loins of your mind."*

F. **Travelers**, like the Jews, eating the first Passover, need to be girded and ready for travel; as should we.

1. And like **Elijah** and Elisha's servant **Gahazi (II Kings 4:29)**, we need to be girded up and ready for service.
2. **Soldiers**, too, need to have their gear and uniforms tightened down around their bodies.

G. If you'll remember, **Jeremiah** was initially a very reluctant prophet.

1. But God told him that he had been called to divine service even before his birth.
2. The Lord warned him that there was a great work to be done, and really tough battles to be fought.
3. Then he said in **Jeremiah 1:17** – *"Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces..."*
4. When we look at the daunting task of representing Christ Jesus in a world that hates Him, & probably hates us as well, we need to gird up the loins our minds, forget about the dogs, and focus on our responsibilities. Don't let your **mind wander**; don't permit it to **worry** about temporal temporary things.
5. As Jesus said, *"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and (be) ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord..."*

### III. Just after the exhortation to properly gird ourselves, Peter adds, be **SOBER**.

A. After preparing and enabling yourself to run, to serve, to fight or whatever the Lord asks of us, Peter says, endeavor to **be vigilant**.

1. **Engage** your heart, mind and emotions to recognize all the physical and spiritual realities around you.
2. The word *"sober"* has come to mean *"not affected by alcohol; not drunk."*
3. Two hundred years ago it meant: *"temperate; not running to excess; showing moderation & self-restraint."*
4. In other words, it was not then used exclusively in regard to drunkenness.

B. Some of the scriptures using this word tell us:

1. *"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."*
2. *"But **WATCH** (be sober) thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."*

3. **Paul** told Timothy that in order to be the effective evangelist which the world needs and the Lord requires, he needed to be serious, vigilant and alert.
  - a. Not only are there opportunities for service and gospelization which we need to recognize and address.
  - b. But sobriety is necessary due to Satan's hatred of Christ and the work of the Lord.
4. **Peter** liked this word, using it here and also in chapters 4 and 5.
  - a. *"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."*
  - b. The revelation and apocalypse of the Lord Jesus is imminent, therefore be sober and watchful.
  - c. And also *"be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."*
- C. On our walk to the park – in our daily lives – we need to be aware of the potential dog attacks, even before it becomes necessary to gird ourselves for self-defense.

#### IV. The third thing to which Peter refers is **SELF-ENCOURAGEMENT**.

- A. *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*
  1. The Biblical word *"hope"* is sometimes used as a **noun**.
    - a. And in that case it is rarely what the world thinks that it is.
    - b. It is not an emotional wish, but rather it is the unreceived, but guaranteed, promise of God.
  2. The hope of the saint is blessed. The highest of all hopes is the return of Christ; His revelation.
  3. *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*
- B. In this case Peter speaks of hope, **not** as a **noun**, but as a **verb**.
  1. The Greek word is translated *"hope"* 10 times, but it is better understood translated *"trust"* 12 times
  2. *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and (**trust**) to the end..."*
  3. For what are we to hope and trust? There are probably many answers, but what does Peter tell us?
  4. *"Hope to the end for the **GRACE** that is to be brought unto you **at the REVELATION** of Jesus Christ."*
- C. Try to put yourselves into the sandals of the saints in the first century.
  1. For the Jewish convert, his faith had been in a Messiah whom he had completely misunderstood just a few years earlier.
    - a. The Jews had not been looking for a resurrected Messiah, but a never-dying, all-conquering Messiah.
    - b. So these Jewish believers were going out on a religious limb to trust in the resurrected Jesus Christ.
  2. And for the Greeks, Romans and other heathen tribes, they were putting their hope and trust in someone who had come from among the hated Hebrews.
  3. Now both peoples were living in the expectation of the Kingdom of God which Jesus preached.
  4. Many of them were looking for the Millennial Kingdom to which the Old Testament prophets had spoken.
  5. But rather than peace and holiness in the world, all they could see, without faith, were the snarling dogs.
  6. Was it to them that the writer to the Hebrew said in **10:35**: *"Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."*
- D. *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*
  1. Do I detect Peter's expectation of the imminent arrival of Christ?
  2. Do I hear him telling those saints in Asia, Pontus and Galatia, that they would soon see Christ returning to establish that Millennial Kingdom?
  3. One of the things the Saviour will carry with him will be more grace.
  4. He will bring with him *"the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."*

5. *“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”*
6. Wasn't Peter in the comforting business with the words of this epistle?
7. He was reminding these readers that they shouldn't be surprised at the return of Christ.

## V. Conclusion

- A. We are living in spiritually dangerous days.
  1. It seems that Satan's power and dominion over the world is increasing every moment.
  2. There is a pit bull terrier living on every block these days.
  3. Satan's dogs are on a short leash, and it is only by God's grace and omnipotence they are not all released.
- B. How should we handle the circumstances and seasons of manifold temptation, balancing them with God's blessings and promises?
  1. Peter tells us.
  2. *“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*