

TITLE: Responding to Salvation Grace (Part 7)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:17

THEME: Our Response to the Glory of our Salvation

NUMBER: 1PET31-1105

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Opening Prayer {Open Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 1}

I may have said it b4 – as far as this passage is concerned, I feel like t/man who jumped on his horse & rode off madly in all directions. Amazing how t/Scripture unfolds as you study it; it lit. unfolds in all sorts of directions/ways you never thought possible. Seems that I always go into a passage wondering "How in t/world am I going to get enough material for a sermon from this passage?" (o' man of little faith!).

All that we have covered in this passage has been t/fruit of lots of digging. We have as a motto, "Mining the treasure of God's Word one verse at a time" – very appropriate.

As we've mined this paragraph in 1 Peter, it's been under the heading of:

I. Our Response to the Glory of our Salvation (13-21)

Our main point has been that our salvation demands a response. Really how t/context unfolds {cf. vv. 2-12, with vv. 13-21}.

First==>

A. We are to Fix our Hope on Future Grace (13)

Our ultimate hope as believers is grounded in future grace, t/grace that comes through/at the coming of JC.

Therefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, with sober-mindedness, set your hope fully on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We've looked at ==>

1. Preparing our Minds (13a)

This is where Peter starts==>

Therefore, having girded up the loins of your mind . . .

B. We are to Forsake our Former Passions (14)

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

a. Union with Christ (Romans 6)

{neg followed by a pos}

C. We are to Pursue Holiness (15-16)

But like the holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written: "You shall be holy, for I Am Holy."

God's Holiness // Call of God // What it means for us to be holy // different ways that Xns have addressed personal holiness t/o hist. of t/CH. "Balanced approach to holiness." First - Principle of taking sin seriously; Pursue holiness; Knowing what God has done for us (X's active and passive obedience for us); What we are to do (what it means to forsake sin & to engage ourselves in spiritual disciplines - Bible intake/worship/prayer/involvement in life of t/CH); Why we are to pursue holiness; Why we don't do it as we should . . .

1. Other things I've been dying to share with you!

(like t/grounds-keeper of t/local cemetery who said that business is so good that people are literally dying to get in).

a. Wonderful parallel between this entire passage and what we read of the Jews during the time of the Exodus

There's a lot of OT imagery that Peter is drawing from, not only here, but t/o this letter. While we are here I wanted to share some of this w/you.

(1) I want to shift gears for a few minutes . . .

Change hats from preacher to teacher. In doing so I want to point out to you the chart that came with your outline; it's a chart that I spent some time putting together.

I'm hesitant to do things like this in a sermon. Mainly because it's more appropriate for teaching rather than preaching. Also qualify that I'm not contending that Peter had every one of these ideas in mind when he wrote 1 Peter, or that some of these ideas could be better developed outside of the books of Exodus or Leviticus. But, for our purposes there are some strong parallels that I believe lay behind our NT text.

(2) Go through A Brief Survey of Parallels to Israel During the Time of the Exodus Chart

Back to ==>

I. Our Response to the Glory of our Salvation (13-21)

A. We Fix our Hope on Future Grace (13)

B. We Forsake our Former Passions (14)

C. We Pursue Holiness (15-16)

Fourth Point==>

D. We are to Love the Father and Fear His Judgement (17)

I know that these two ideas seem contradictory, but they're not. I also know that as far as judgement is concerned, we have to deal w/passages such as John 5:24 ==>

". . . he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

In this context, Judgement = condemnation | (Rom. 8:1: There is no condemnation for those in CJ).

That doesn't contradict t/fact that we as Xns will be judged by God for what we have done (failed to do) post-conversion (as believers).

This point very much relates to t/main idea of this passage==>

Responding to salvation grace results in the pleasure of hope and the pursuit of holiness.

Because love of t/Father & a healthy fear of his judgement should move us to pursue that holiness even as we enjoy t/pleasure of hope.

Look at verse 17==>

And if you call upon the Father as the One who judges with impartiality according to each one's work, conduct yourselves with fear during your time of exile,

Three common elements: Father || Judgement || Fear. ? is "how do we pull all of this together? I don't know that I have wrestled w/a passage lately as much as I have this one.

1. Three Reasons (from v. 17) why we are to fear the Father's judgement

a. Precisely Because He is Our Father

That's exactly how Peter begins v. 17==>

And if you call upon the Father . . .

(1) Third & last time that Peter uses the word Πατηρ (referring to the first person of the Trinity)

Used it in v. 2 where we saw that it was t/Father who elected/chose us to salvation, through t/sanctifying work of t/Spirit & Saving work of t/Son.

Used it in t/opening benediction of v. 3 where he further distinguishes t/work of t/Father & t/Son in our salvation {read}

Now: Peter uses it here in v. 17 to frame an aspect of our relationship with God - He is called upon as "Father" by those who know Him.

(2) It's a distinguishing characteristic

We have a Father/son relationship w/Him. (cf. 1:14). Not to say that just because someone uses t/word he's regenerate. Not t/point (1 Cor. 12:3). Just because someone can mouth t/words doesn't mean that he/she is a Xn. Not just w/words, it's t/relationship that lies behind t/words.

(3) That relationship is very much Assumed here

Cond. of t/First class in t/original Gk. text. "If" is not an "if" of doubt; it's an "if" of certainty. Cf. NIV - "Since".

And if you call upon the Father . . . (and you do)

(4) "Father" is an Intimate, Personal Title for God

Every prayer of Jesus recorded in t/NT He addresses God as Father. W/except. of 1 - when he was dying on the cross for t/sins of t/elect he cried out **"My God, My God . . . Why have you forsaken me?"**

Jesus taught His disciples to pray to God as "Father" (Matt. 6:9).

(a) Somewhat Rare in the Jewish thought of Jesus' day

Jews preferred t/more transcendent & exalted titles for God such as "Sovereign Lord, King of the Universe." Not to say that t/concept of God's Fatherhood lacked in t/OT. But NT is saturated w/it.

(5) Theological Doctrine of Adoption

John 1:12 **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,**

Ephesians 1:5 **He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,**

Galatians 4:4-5 **But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

Note v. 6 - **And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"**

Fatherhood of God is inseparably connected w/theological doctrine of adoption & adoption is a uniquely NT concept, as Gal. 4 teaches.

God predestines us to salvation; He redeems us by t/blood of JC; He works in our hearts & lives, bringing us to t/place where we believe, turning from our sin to X, receiving Him. That makes us God's children, those who cry out "Abba! Father!"

Remember, we began v. 17 ==>

1. Three Reasons that we are to fear the Father's judgement

First==>

a. Precisely Because He is Our Father

Fact that we have a loving Father should motivate us: IF - We - truly - love - Him.

Acc. to 1 John 5:2, a true believer is someone who loves God & keeps his commandments. Why are those two things related? Love for Him & obeying Him? Because there's no greater motivator than love. To be moved by love for another is a purely selfless motivation.

I may be motivated out of obligation, but that's not noble. Lot's of people are obligated to do things they don't want to do.

I may be motivated out of personal gain. People do all sorts of things, many of them immoral, for selfish gain.

When I'm motivated out of love, not for myself, but love for someone else, that's when I am operating out of selflessness. Genuine love is t/emptying of myself to serve another (John 15:13). Also why He said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Greatest, noblest motivator in t/world. Nothing greater than that.

Those are lessons we can carry into all of our relationships (marriages; parenting).

I'm a big fan of t/old situation comedy "The Andy Griffith Show." That show ran when I was very young & in many ways is a defining icon of my childhood. One of t/most memorable episodes involved Andy disciplining his son, Opie, w/o any of t/standard means of punishment. He didn't spank him, he didn't ground him. He simply said to him, "I want you to know that I am very disappointed in you."

You see, that was enough! In fact, it was worse! "I love you so much that I'd rather be hurt myself in some physical way, than suffer t/pain of knowing that I have hurt you!"

I find great affirmation in t/fact that I have this sort of relationship w/my 4 y/o daughter.

Few days ago she and I were sitting in t/car waiting for Lois to pick up a few things at the grocery store. While we were waiting she spilled water all over the front seat & all over me. I wasn't too pleased w/that & I in no certain terms let her know. My displeasure alone brought her to tears & she sat opposite me crying w/a look of hurt in her eyes.

She wasn't concerned about being disciplined in some way (not at this time anyway). She was concerned that I was upset at her & that fact alone caused her remorse.

Shouldn't it be that way in our relationship w/God. Do you find any motivation in knowing that your disobedience grieves His heart?

Does his displeasure bring you remorse? If it doesn't, you need to confess that as sin. Sin of apathy/indifference.

D. We are to Love the Father and Fear His Judgement (17)

We're talking about love & t/virtues of a father/child relationship. Not contradictory. These two factors: Love for God and Fear of Him are balanced t/o Scripture. I probably don't have to remind you about t/love of God; we hear about God's love all t/time. From children's SS to Youth Group to t/maj. of sermons we've heard. Our pulpits today flood people's ears w/God's love. Not saying that's bad. (1 John 4:8). It is out of balance.

Love has to be balanced w/healthy fear. After all, Proverbs 9:10 tells us:
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom . . .

Admonition to remember God's power & holiness isn't lost to t/NT==>
Hebrews 12:28-29 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

1 Peter 2:17 "honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God."

Luke 12:4-5 "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

Those words weren't spoken to t/hardened Pharisees; spoken to Jesus' disciples. Apply to us, even as God's chosen children.

A second reason why we are to fear t/Father's judgement==>

b. Because He Judges with Impartiality

And if you call upon the Father [as what?] as the One who judges with impartiality according to each one's work . . .

Can't separate the tenderness/intimacy of his fatherhood from his role as impartial judge.

(1) "Impartiality" literally means "to not receive the face"

IOW - it's an idiom that means "not influenced by outward appearances."

During t/time of t/monarchy in OT Israel, Saul served as t/nation's first King. King Saul was t/Master of Disaster; his rein was marked by ruin, a ruin that in the end ruined him & brought God's hand of judgement. At t/end of 1 Sam. 15, it says that God was grieved in making Saul King. Saul is to be replaced, & one of t/sons of Jesse would be t/replacement. Samuel travels to Bethlehem where Jesse lived. He tells t/elders of t/city that he has come to sacrifice to t/Lord, t/sons of Jesse are invited & Samuel notices one of Jesse's sons, Eliab, and thinks to himself, "This has got to be t/one." No doubt he was handsome, he was tall & probably well-built. The guy looked t/part.

What did God say?

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

God "doesn't receive the face;" he's not impressed by t/things that impress us: outward appearances; wealth; achievement; status; education; intellect; power. He's impartial; his judgements are perfect.

(2) Peter knew this from his knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures

DEU 10:17 "For the \Lord\ your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe.

2CH 19:7 "Now then let the fear of the \Lord\ be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the \Lord\ our God will have no part in unrighteousness, or partiality, or the taking of a bribe."

As much as Peter knew t/OT concept, God's impartiality as it related to the salvation of the Gentiles was something Peter had to personally learn. After an object lesson from God (Peter's vision of a sheet coming down from heaven w/all sorts of unclean animals on it w/the heavenly admonition "kill and eat."). Peter was kosher & he said "no." God replied, "What I have myself cleansed no longer call unclean." Afterward, Peter goes to t/house of Cornelius (a Gentile) & witnesses t/conversion of Gentiles. Acts 10:34, Peter says, "Now I know that God is not one to show partiality.

(3) Something else Peter would have known from the OT

was that God rewards each man according to his work/deeds

PSA 62:12 . . . For Thou dost recompense a man according to his work.

PRO 24:12 . . . will He not render to man according to his work?

JER 17:10 "I, the \Lord,\ search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

Peter, in reflecting that OT tradition, writes here in v. 17==>

[He is the One] who judges with impartiality according to each one's work . . .

(4) Begg the question: 'What about us?'

Will believer's be judged by their works? Might surprise you, but t/answer is "yes." Yes, in the sense that our works testify to the fact that we have saving faith.

Matthew 16:27 “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and WILL THEN RECOMPENSE EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS

ROM 2:6 who \will render to every man according to his deeds\:

2CO 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

REV 22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

True believers will not be judged in order to be condemned. We will be judged to see if our works verified t/fact that we are indeed genuine Xns. That we are wheat and not tares. We will also be judged to determine t/nature of our rewards.

(a) Direct parallel to Romans chapter 2 {turn there}

Begin in v. 2 ("those things" = sins of vv. 24-32).

Verse 3 - implication is that God doesn't tolerate hypocrisy // impartial.

Verse 4 - Parallels t/motivation of love that we looked at in 1 Peter 1:17.

Verses 5-6 - quote of Psalm 62:12.

Verses 7-8 - Note the two classes of people.

Verses 9-11 {finish here}

Will we as believer's be judged in keeping with what we have done?

Romans 14:10-13 10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.11 For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.” 12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.

We shall all stand before the judgement seat of God & we shall all give an account of our lives before Him.

(b) Isn't this contrary to grace?

No, it really isn't. It isn't because grace brings with it the transformation of heart that demonstrates itself in good works. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone. But as t/reformers reminded us: while we are saved through faith alone, the faith that saves is never alone (it is accompanied by obedience to God).

To put it another way, "No one is saved by works, but no one will be saved w/o them." James chapter 2 (faith apart from works is dead).

(c) Another example of that is in Galatians chapter 5

{go through vv. 16-24}. In same letter, TAP contends that we are not saved by or through our obedience/works/law. But he also contends that obedience (fruit of the Spirit) is evidence of a heart that has been saved.

Thomas Schreiner is a NT scholar of the first order. He teaches NT theology at the Southern Baptist Seminary where Albert Mohler is president (lot's of good reformed theology there). In Schreiner's commentary on 1 Peter he writes==>

" judgment according to works is a pervasive theme in Jewish [or OT] literature Such a theme is common in the New Testament as well and regularly refers to God's assessment of people, both believers and unbelievers, at the final judgement It is doubtful that Peter [is saying] anything different here No dichotomy exists between judgement according to works and God's grace. God works are evidence that God has truly begotten a person." Then he observes: "Perhaps Peter used the singular 'work' to summarize the lives of believers as a whole." [page 83]

If we understand what we mean by "judgement" and what we mean by "works" & what we mean by "grace" there really is no contradiction.

Picture a camp filled with captured terrorists. Let's say that I am running this camp & I have t/ability to pardon any of t/terrorists that are in my camp. They're all guilty, but I can pardon them. Let's say that I work w/some of them and lead many of them to faith in JC. They forsake their terrorism. They forsake Islam and remove their old uniforms. They carry Bibles & they act & speak differently. They are transformed.

Did this happen by grace or works? Grace, right? Now, I tell the commander of the camp to release every one of those former terrorists. He asks, "How am I to know which ones to release." I say, "You can judge them by their works. The ones who may be released are t/ones who no longer wear t/old uniform; they don't act t/same way, they have forsaken their old life." So he does so. They were judged according to their works, but that didn't violate t/fact that they were pardoned by grace and grace alone.

(d) All of this relates to Lordship and Perseverance

Those who receive JC as Savior also receive Him as Lord; by grace their lives are changed and they persevere by virtue of God's preservation.

BTW - There's another place in 1 Peter where we see t/same themes of Judgement / obedience / salvation / believers / unbelievers / Fatherhood of God / motivation to holiness==>

1 Peter 4:17-19 **17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? 19 Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.**

Over the past century, t/CH has fallen prey to t/lackadaisical idea that since our sins are forgiven and we are justified there is no reason to fear judgement. We've thrown the baby out with the bath water.

We don't have to face the punitive wrath of God because X has already faced that for us. That doesn't mean that we won't be judged & that this judgement won't be painful.

That shouldn't paralyze us with terror, but it should motivate us to good.

17th century Westminster Confession of Faith upholds this as well. In t/section of this confession entitled "Final Judgement" ==>

God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged; but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

Responding to Salvation Grace Results in ==>

D. Love for the Father and Fear of His Judgement (17)

That spurs us on in the pursuit of holiness . . .

a. Precisely Because He is Our Father

b. Because He Judges with Impartiality

That brings us to our last point ==>

c. Because we want to stand in the day of His judgement

And if you call upon the Father as the One who judges with impartiality according to each one's work, conduct yourselves with fear during your time of exile.

(1) All of this is written to motivate us to the pursuit of holiness

. . . . conduct yourselves with fear during your time of exile.

(a) Fear = φόβος

This is more than "reverence" (there are lots of folks that I respect or who deserve respect that I don't fear). Fear apart from terror. Healthy fear. Understanding of who God is and who I am in light of who He is.

That should motivate all of us in all of our conduct during our time of exile.

(b) What are we to fear?

We are to fear God (Matt. 10:28)

We are to fear his judgement (2 Cor. 5:10)

We are to fear his displeasure (2 Cor. 5:9)

We are to fear His hand of discipline (Heb. 12:5-11)

Fear of God is a sign of a NT CH that's healthy & growing in maturity
Acts 5 God judged Ananias & his wife, Sapphira for their lying
hypocrisy & great fear came upon t/CH.

9:31 CH enjoyed peace, was built up, moved forward in t/fear of
t/Lord & in t/comfort of t/HS

2 Cor. 7:1 Fear of the Lord perfects holiness.

Phil. 2:12 We are to work out our salvation in fear & trembling.

Biblical fear is a healthy fear. But it's not a popular message. Preaching this sort of message would empty most CHs.

Let me direct this toward you this AM ==>

And if you call upon the Father as the One who judges with impartiality according to each one's work, conduct yourselves with fear during your time of exile.

Great Baptist Theologian, John Gill reflects on this passage ==>

It is indeed but for a “time”, that [you] are sojourners, not an eternity . . . it is but a little while, and Christ will come and take [you] home to his Father's house, where [you] shall be for ever with him; for it is only here on earth that [you] are pilgrims and strangers: and while [you] are so [you] should spend [your] time “in fear”; not of men nor of devils, nor of death and judgment, hell and eternal damnation; for such a fear is not consistent with the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and is the effect of the law, and not encouraged by the Gospel; . . . but in the fear of God . . . which springs from the grace of God, and is increased by it; [this fear] is consistent with the strongest acts of faith, and with the greatest expressions of spiritual joy; is opposite to pride and self-confidence, and includes the whole worship of God, external and internal, and a religious [life of] humility and lowliness of mind. [John Gill, Commentary on 1 Peter, PDF file, page 30]

Next week I can almost promise that we will finish this passage.

One more point under our heading

I. Our Response to the Glory of our Salvation (13-21)

E. We are to Fix our Hope on Present Grace (18-21)