

TITLE: Responding to Salvation Grace (Part 6)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:15-16

THEME: Our Response to the Glory of our Salvation

NUMBER: 1PET30-1005

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Read Passage

Another Hurricane

As you prob. know, we have another hurricane churning down in t/Gulf. Wilma is the 21st H. of t/season, tying t/record for most hurricanes in a single season, a record that dates back to 1933. We know that hurricanes cause death & damage & they do so 3 basic ways: high winds; high tides; local flooding. Most are surprised to learn that t/greatest flooding doesn't necc. come from t/largest hurricanes. Indep. from size or category, t/worst flooding tends to occur when a hurricane stalls over a single area. When that happens a single town can be devastated by hours or even days of unabated rainfall.

I feel a little like one of those hurricanes

We've stalled in our study of 1 Peter right over v. 15. This has been such a rich section in this passage that I have found it difficult to move beyond it. Lest you start to feel flooded, this will be t/last week in v. 15 & we will move onward through v. 16 this am.

I don't want you to miss the larger context

We have been looking at ==>

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

Our main point has been that our salvation demands a response. Namely==>

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

Back in v. 13 we saw our first point ==>

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

We have a hope that is grounded in future grace, t/grace that comes w/JC, thru Him, & at his future coming==>

Therefore, having girding 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.

1. We are to live in light of future grace

I was talking to someone last week about how we don't think enough about this. We're so busy w/the kids, our careers, our hobbies, our homes, what's on TV tonight – that we sort of skate along w/little thought of what it's like to hope in future grace. Not until some tragedy strikes, or t/doctor says it's "bad news" do we realize that we've lost our focus.

Millions of Xns around t/world live otherwise. They know what it's like to live in t/light of future grace. They have little hope in this world: persecuted, sick, live in utter poverty, not sure where their next meal will come from. They know what it's like to set their hope on future grace. That is their hope! Should be ours also

Secondly ==>

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

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

Lit. "as children of obedience" (as those who, as God's children are to be marked by your obedience) – don't be conformed to t/passions that characterized your live of ignorance while was lived apart from J.C. Implication is that you have new passions // affections.

Continue to forsake those old ones, even as (third point)==>

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

There's a negative in v. 14 (a putting off) followed by a positive in v. 15 (a putting on).

I thought we'd finish up this section this am by looking at two additional points: why we are to pursue holiness; why we fail in our pursuit of holiness

1. Why we are to Pursue Holiness (v. 15-16)

a. #1 - We are to pursue holiness because it's in keeping with our new identity

(1) We saw that back in verse 14==>

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

It's been rightly said that "Living the Xn life is simply being who you are." That is, we are to live consistent w/who you are as a Xn, as one who has all t/resources of JC at his/her disposal.

Several times I have heard stories about an elderly man or woman who lived in poverty. They were misers who owned a very average home, they scrimped and saved, they lived in garbage and filth, wore rags. They live & they die in this dirt-poor condition. When it comes time to settle their affairs it is discovered that they had hundreds of thousands of dollars in the bank. Only reason they lived in poverty was due to their own ignorance.

When we don't pursue holiness it's only because of our spiritual ignorance. We are not a people of spiritual poverty.

Peter tells us in the beginning of his second letter==>

His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

(2) You are rich in Christ; Don't live in spiritual poverty

As one who is rich in X, you are to pursue holiness because to do any less would be contrary to who you are in X. (union with Christ)

Another way to say this would be it's in keeping with your relationship with God; a parent-child relationship. Remember how v. 14 begins==>

As children of obedience . . .

You are to be like t/One, t/Holy One, who birthed you. If you have been born again, it was by God's doing, not your own. God birthed you; he re-created you to be like Him.

Think about it: when is a child is most like his father? When he acts like him. When his conduct or behavior models that of his parent through and through.

Ephesians 5:1 . . . **be imitators of God, as beloved children;**

When Alexander the great discovered a coward in his army, a man who also bore the name "Alexander," he was incensed. He told the man, "Renounce your cowardice or renounce your name."

For you, who have been created in t/image of JC, for you to walk contrary to that image is to deny that which you by very nature are.

Like the story of a woman who was being tailgated by a very stressed-out man on a busy street. As the woman approached the next intersection, the light turned yellow and, even though she probably could have made it through, she cautiously stopped. The man behind her hit the roof; he laid on the horn, screaming in frustration. Suddenly he heard a tap on his window and looked up to see a police officer standing outside his driver's door. The officer, with gun drawn, ordered the man to exit the car with hands up. After meticulously checking his driver's license and registration, the officer allowed the man to leave with a warning. The frustrated driver asked the officer, "Why all the fuss? I understand that you have to be careful, but C'mom, to have your gun drawn on me—isn't that going a little overboard? To that the officer replied, "I'm sorry for the misunderstanding. I thought you were a car thief." "A car thief?!" the man replied. "I've never been arrested for anything in my life!"

"Yes," said the officer, "I understand, but I was behind your car while you were tailgating the driver in front of you & while you were blowing your horn & shaking your fist. And I observed your "CHOOSE LIFE" license plate frame, your "WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?" bumper sticker, and the Christian fish emblem on your trunk. Naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car."

Every time we act contrary to holiness it's a similar case of mistaken identity.

a. #1 - We are to pursue holiness because it's in keeping with our new identity

We see the same thing in verse 15 ==>

But like the holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;

The God who called us to faith in His Son, JC // salvation, doesn't do so apart from calling us to a life of personal holiness // X-likeness.

(1) God's calling is a holy calling

You can't separate the call of God to salvation from the call of God to holiness.

b. #2 - We are to pursue holiness because God is Holy (v. 16)

Our God is perfectly holy. His H. (as I reminded you a few wks. ago) is a wholly-otherness. It's a perfect, consuming holiness that defines who He is as God. He is completely separated from wickedness in a white-hot purity of his nature.

Psalm 99 contains 9 verses. Three times in those 9 vv. t/Psalmist makes a declaration of God's holiness.

PSA 99:3 *Let them praise Thy great and awesome name; Holy is He.*

PSA 99:5 *Exalt the \Lord\ our God, And worship at His footstool; Holy is He.*

PSA 99:9 *Exalt the \Lord\ our God, And worship at His holy hill; For holy is the \Lord\ our God.*

(1) This is a central truth in all of Scripture

Because it is written: "You shall be holy, for I Am Holy."

"It is written" stands as a formula used to introduce a scriptural quotation (Jesus used it 3x in Matt. 4). In this case, it's a quote from OT book of Leviticus where it occurs 3x: 11:44; 19:2; 20:7.

But it appears that Peter is focusing on Lev. 19:2. Specifically Lev. 19:2 in t/LXX (Gk. translation of t/OT which was completed in 3d c. BC).

LEV 19:2 [LXX] "Speak to the congregation of the children of Israel, and you shall say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

If we go back to chapter 11, vv. 44-46 we see that t/command to be holy was originally connected with the Jews deliverance from Egypt, as well as t/distinction between clean and unclean animals.

Leviticus 11:44-46 ==> 44 'For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.⁴⁵ 'For I am the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; thus you shall be holy for I am holy.'"

God called Israel out of Egypt to be separate // holy. For t/Jews, Egypt stood for bondage; for t/Jews Egypt represented that from which they needed deliverance, even sin and death.

(2) Remember the Passover . . .

The last plague on t/nation of Egypt during t/time of t/Exodus was death to every first-born in t/land. But God's people would be spared if they took a one-year old unblemished male lamb, slaughter it, place t/blood of that innocent lamb on t/doorposts of their homes. When t/angel of death went thru t/land at midnight, he would Passover every home where he t/blood of t/lamb was applied.

Peter uses this command to remind us that God has called us out of our Egypt in a similar way . . .

Our Egypt was our bondage to sin, our old life lived in ignorance (cf. v. 14). We were slaves to Pharaoh (Satan) and God purchased us and redeemed us by t/blood of our Passover Lamb, JC, whose blood was applied to t/doorposts of our hearts by faith. God miraculously took us through our Red Sea to safety on t/other side.

18 knowing that you have been redeemed from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things like silver and gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like an unblemished and spotless lamb.

We pursue holiness because God redeemed us.

b. #2 - We are to pursue holiness because God is Holy (v. 16)

EXO 15:11 "Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?"

c. #3 - We are to pursue holiness because God commands it of us (v. 15-16)

(1) Does vv. 15 and 16 sound optional to you?

Do these sound like suggestions?

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

Do this if it strikes you. Be holy if you feel like it. Hey guys, this is just a friendly thought, a helpful suggestion. No! God commands us to be holy // to steer clear from sin & to pursue that which pleases Him. God commands us to be like His Son, JC.

(2) What God commands we are to obey . . .

God doesn't commands his children to do something He has not enabled them to perform. We have no excuses when it comes to sinful behavior.

As we saw in Romans 6: we died to sin & therefore cannot live in it // we are freed from t/power of sin in our lives // we no longer need to be slaves in Egypt.

Romans 6:6 **knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;**

We have freedom in X // we are no longer slaves // we don't have to serve Pharaoh!

About a month ago I was bemoaning my struggles with sin and God spoke to my heart with a very simple, but profound concept. It was as if He said (don't worry, I'm not getting extra-biblical revelation; you know what I mean by this) It was as if He said, "Tony, You don't have to sin."

In theology we have a Latin phrase: *non posse non peccare* vs. *posse non peccare*. This phrase differentiates Xns and non-Xns as it relates to the issue of indwelling sin. Non-Xns are *non posse non peccare* (not able not to sin); Xns are *posse non peccare* (able not to sin).

That's true of every believer in JC. That's what I mean when I say: We have freedom in Christ // we are no longer slaves // we don't have to serve Pharaoh!

d. #4 - We are to pursue holiness because God is an impartial judge (v. 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,

(1) I don't want to get ahead of myself . . .

I'm going to have much more to say about this verse next time, esp. how this verse fits into t/context of responding to salvation grace.

Suffice to say that one aspect of our motivation to pursue holiness is that God is judge. Not only is he judge, he is an impartial judge.

(a) Nepotism doesn't apply to God

IOW - he doesn't turn a blind eye to our disobedience because we are His children. It's not like he sees a Xn doing something wrong and says to Himself, "Well, if that was some pagan acting that way, I'd come down in judgement."

God judges w/impartiality. He's not a respecter of persons. Peter may be referring to fact that every Xn will stand before t/judgment seat of X.

We see that in 2 Cor. 5 (might note how t/concepts of holy living/obedience & fear are connected with this judgment)==>

9 Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. [holiness/obedience] 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. 11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord

Might be t/judgement Peter has in mind in v. 17. OR Peter may have in mind temporal judgment. That is, God's disciplining of us while we are still alive. Writer to the Hebrews tells us that God disciplines every one of his children (that discipline isn't joyful, but sorrowful). Heb. 12.

Either way, we know God is impartial. If that is true (and it is) we are to what (according to 2nd half of v. 17)?

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

Our response should be fear; a healthy fear that motivates us toward H.

e. #5 - We are to pursue holiness because it brings us joy

2x in chapter 1, Peter tells us that there is joy in our salvation (vv. 6, 8). While there is joy in our salvation, there is none in our sin. We all know that. Sin may afford a fleeting, temporary pleasure, but it pales in comparison to t/delight we experience in God.

We know from experience that times when we have walked in some sort of disobedience, whether it be actively engaging in sinful behavior, or being slack in spiritual discipline, during those times we have been most miserable.

In some ways it's like eating something that tastes good at first, but in t/end it makes you sick. You look at it, you smell it, you salivate. You know you shouldn't eat it, but you do. Afterward, you feel lousy & you tell yourself, "You idiot. Why did you do that? It wasn't worth it, was it?" But, all-too-often, when you feel better again, same scenario comes up, you know you shouldn't, but you do & once again you're sick."

That's what forsaking holiness, even for a fleeting moment, does to the heart of a true believer. Holiness fans the flames of joy in our lives. Jesus connected obedience with joy in John 15 ==>

He said, "If you obey my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy be in you and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:10-11).

f. # 6 - We are to pursue holiness because it brings God's glory

We can't separate points 5 and 6. IOW - what brings us joy is to bring God glory & bringing God glory is to bring us joy.

Westminster Catechism brings those two points together: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

To glorify him is to enjoy Him & to enjoy Him is to glorify Him. As t/word would imply, that which you enjoy brings you joy.

I like the way John Piper expresses it when he says that God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.

But I look around t/CH today and I see a CH that is largely not satisfied with Him. We want God plus something else. God plus our conveniences//entertainment//feel-good sermons//personal happiness. We think God is fast-food, we can have it our way.

One of my favorite Puritan quotes is by Thomas Watson. In Watson's work, A Body of Divinity, he reflected on our satisfaction of God==>
“If there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, then sure there is enough to satisfy us. . . . Fresh joys spring continually from his face; and he is as much to be desired after millions of years by glorified souls as at the first moment. There is a fulness in God that satisfies, and yet so much sweetness, that the soul still desires. God is a delicious good.” [Thomas Watson (1620-1686) “Man’s Chief End” in A Body of Divinity]

g. #7 - We are to pursue holiness because the enemy of our souls would see us fail

This is an aspect of Xn living that we don't take seriously enough. We have an enemy. In the first chapter of Job we're told that Satan appeared before God. God asks him "where have you been" (God knew where he had been, but he asks so that it comes from Satan's own mouth). Satan replies==>

“From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”

Satan still roams t/earth. He does so with purpose.

1 Peter 5:8 **Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**

He is t/enemy of our souls. He revels in our sin // failures even as God is grieved in them. Whom do you want to please . . . (2 Cor. 5:9).

If our enemy is pleased when we fail, we need to remember who is displeased. That's our 8th and last point==>

h. #8 - We are to pursue holiness because our disobedience grieves the heart of God

Prophet Isaiah, speaking of the Jews in their disobedience ==>

63:10 **But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit. . .**

NT parallel is found in Ephesians 4:30 where we are similarly warned against grieving the Holy Spirit.

Do we really believe that God cares. Deep down, do we believe that. Have we so exalted God above the creation that we've ceased to believe that he cares about his creation, about us!

Do you believe that your disobedience grieves t/heart of God? Need to see our sin as treason– it's treasonous to God; it's unfaithfulness to our bridegroom, JC. It's spiritual adultery.

Pull this all together

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

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

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

We've dissected this passage in just about every possible way over past sev. weeks, culminating in 8 reasons why we are to pursue holiness==>

#1 - We are to pursue holiness because it's in keeping with our new identity; #2 - We are to pursue holiness because God is Holy; #3 - We are to pursue holiness because God commands it of us; #4 - We are to pursue holiness because God is an impartial judge; #5 - We are to pursue holiness because it brings us joy; . #6 - We are to pursue holiness because it brings God glory; #7 - We are to pursue holiness because the enemy of our souls would see us fail; #8 - We are to pursue holiness because our disobedience grieves the heart of God.

I want to wrap up this am by quickly looking at ==>

2. Why we fail in our pursuit of holiness

No one is perfect in their pursuit. We stumble, we sputter along sometimes like an old farm tractor. Why do we fail? I've spent sev. hrs. analyzing this question, I've come up with 6 possible reasons.

a. #1 - We fail because of Indwelling sin

I said earlier that we as Xns are *posse non peccare* But, while it is not rendered certain that we will sin, we will nonetheless fall prey to sin. IOW - we don't have to at any given moment, but we will. John reminds us of that in 1 John 1:8 (if we say we have so sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us).

We still battle against indwelling sin, our flesh. Romans 7 experience.

"I do the things I hate, but it's not me, it's the sin that indwells me, nothing good is in my flesh, the wishing is present in me but the doing of good isn't, I do the things I hate, there's a principle of evil within me, I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members."

The Puritan John Owen observed "Grace changes the nature of man, but nothing changes the nature of sin." [Sin and Temptation, 16]

b. #2 - We fail because we think it really doesn't matter

1 of our greatest deceptions: "just this once" mentality as it relates to sin. We do same thing with our diets. "I will eat that extra brownie just this once, then I will start fresh tomorrow w/disciplined eating."

Problem is tomorrow turns into a year & 35 pounds ago. Same w/sin. "I'll indulge just this once; I'll get it out of my system & start w/new resolve tomorrow." How many time will you say that to yourself? Will you turn years into decades & decades into a lifetime? Tomorrow will be different. Will it? We can't act as if it doesn't matter.

Tendency for us to look at sin as another tiny drop in a large bucket. "What does once more matter?" If you add 1 drop of water to a large pail, does it look like it's done anything? 1 Drop? One sin to t/entirety of my life? Who's to care? We have to refocus our minds so that we're not looking at it that way. It's a single act of disobedience // spiritual treason // for which X died. To have a cavalier attitude about it is to tread upon t/point that t/writer to Hebrews warns us about when he says:

Hebrews 10:26 **For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,**

Can't treat sin in our lives like a careless game of Russian Roulette. Well, I sinned & nothing happened. The ground didn't open up underneath me! I guess I'll be okay next time. Spin t/cylinder & pull t/trigger once more.

Hebrews 3:12-14 12 Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;

c. # 3- We fail because we have become careless

To be careless is to "care" - "less." Not just apathy (that is a problem).

(1) We're Undisciplined

Last week I spent time outlining t/necessity of personal discipline in our battle for personal holiness. Have to be disciplined in our battle against sin; reading/meditation of God's Word; Spiritual lives of worship (Rom. 12:1 / role of t/H.S.); Guarding our minds; CH participation; Prayer.

Every 1 of these disciplines forms part of our battle array against sin & for holiness. If we're slack in any 1 of them, we have t/proverbial chink in our armor; we're open to attack.

We need to be disciplined battle against Sinful Habits. Old habits die hard - become ingrained in our conduct. For some of you there are certain behaviors that you sort of default into. The wheels of your lives run in t/same old well-worn ruts in t/road. Might be responding out of anger // pride // lust // have to do with some so-called "secret sin."

Don't become careless // let down your guard==>

1 Thessalonians 5 don't sleep, as others do, but . . . be alert and sober. . . . put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

d. # 4 - We fail because we don't believe as we should

I really believe that there is a lack of faith involved. Somehow we don't believe that it really matters; it's that "one more time mentality." Maybe we don't really believe that God is grieved, or that He knows what's best

for us. Even as Xns there are times when we have to repent of our sin of disbelief! Along with faith I would add love (we fail because we don't love as we should). John 14:15. (Cf. Luther & Staupitz)

e. #5 - We fail because we are ignorant

Ignorance comes in many shapes, sizes, and colors. For some it might be ignorance about God's Word // good doctrine (good living is always grounded in good doctrine).

For others it may be ignorance in general, stupidity in specific.

In 1731 Jonathan Edwards (perhaps greatest Amer. theol.) preached a sermon entitled "Stupid as Stones." He preached this to his own church. "Men's wills are opposite to the gospel. The Gospel, the Savior, and His way of salvation don't suit with their natural inclination. The way of salvation is too holy for them, it ascribes too much to God and not enough to themselves. They can see no beauty in Christ wherefore they should desire. And it is impossible that they should be persuaded to love Christ since they see no beauty in Him. They see no excellency, no fitness in salvation; but . . . it is a way contrary to their strongest bent and inclination of their souls. Why? Because they are stupid as stones!"

He goes on to say==>

In telling men of their perishing necessity of a Savior, their guilt, and in setting forth the sufficiency of Christ for salvation, telling them what a complete redemption Christ has wrought and how fully his blood has satisfied divine justice; how acceptable was Christ's obedience to God, and how safe it is appearing in his righteousness, and how glorious the blessings are that he has purchased, and how amiable this person of Jesus Christ is, and how willing he is, and how he has invited them to him; it all signifies nothing to them. Why? Because they are stupid as stones!"

If you think that's bad, you have to go to the conclusion of the sermon. In the conclusion he changes the pronoun. "Why do you not respond as you should? Because you are stupid as stones!" [Taken from a sermon by Al Mohler, 2004 Shepherd's Conference, General Session #5]

I have to beg t/question? Why do we fail in our pursuit of holiness? Sometimes it's because we are (what?): stupid as stones!

f. # 6 - Some fail because they are not genuine believers

Not born-again; not regenerate; sham/counterfeit Xns.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all men, and the [holiness] without which no one will see the Lord.

Writer to Hebrews conditions salvation on personal holiness! Holiness only comes through a transforming relationship w/JC & if you are outside that relationship there can be no personal holiness.

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in Him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him. (1 John 2:1-3)

I suppose in some ways this brings us back to where we began.

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

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

"John Wesley once wrote: 'I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit, coming from God, and returning to God; just hovering over a great gulf; a few months hence I am no more to be seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing—the way to heaven . . .'" [cited in Haddon Robinson, Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, 36]

1 Thess. 3:13 so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.