

Living Faith, Hope, and Love

1 Peter 1:13-22: • 2022-06-19 • 1 Peter Series "From Cross to Crown"



The author and movie critic Paul Asay is known for his love of Batman. He has written many blog posts and magazine articles and has talked on podcasts about superhero movies like the latest Batman film. I'm not too familiar with his work, but I stumbled across a quote by him. It reveals his attitude toward fatherhood. He considered it even more important than being a superhero. He said, *"Forget Batman: when I really thought about what I wanted to be when I grew up, I wanted to be my dad."* Isn't that a sentiment shared by a lot of children? The influence that a father has on his family is often underrated. Today we continue our series looking at 1 Peter and see how Peter urges us to emulate our Father in heaven. As we consider the second half of 1 Peter 1, we see how he urges us to grow in being more like our heavenly Father by living in faith, hope, and love.

Peter urges us to be ready for action. But it's not the type of action that comes from strapping on your toolbelt or Batman's action belt. He wants us to get our minds ready for action. The phrase *"with minds that are alert and fully sober"* is built on a mixed metaphor. Put more literally he tells us to have our belt strapped on our brain. The King James Bible translates it as *"gird the loins of your mind."* Our spiritual life emulating God our Father doesn't begin with action. It begins with the proper heart and mindset.

So how do we spiritually get our minds ready? *"Set your hope on the grace to be brought to you."* A time is coming when Jesus will return. When he comes again, he will hand us the gracious gift of eternal life. We will have a new home in a new creation. We will have new and glorified bodies. We will live with our God forever. This is all his gift to us as part of our inheritance. It is *"the grace to be brought to you."* It is the inheritance that Peter mentioned earlier, *"kept in heaven for you."* Setting our hearts and our hope on Jesus' return keeps us ready for action. Keeping that day and that great gift of God before us makes our hearts and minds ready to live for God.

Peter goes on to list several reasons for emulating our Father in heaven. Firstly, *"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance."* Our Father has given us a new understanding of evil. Do we always rightly consider evil as truly evil? The sinful desires of the flesh are evil. It is foolish ignorance to claim otherwise. We might be tempted to think that our lingering lust, our little lies, or our continual coveting are all not really that bad. But they are evil. They contradict what our Father calls good. And though the world might lead you to think in foolish ignorance that godless entertainment, selfish desires, and all that tempts us are not evil, we know they are. The world might try to convince you that as long as nobody gets hurt it's not evil. God desires that no one is hurt. And he knows that sinful desires and actions actually bring us and others great harm. And the devil wants us to loosen the belt of our minds and allow evil to parade right into our hearts. Have you seen some of the books targeted towards children in many public libraries today? I was at a children's library in Phoenix recently and found the materials borderline political or pornographic. They were designed to teach children to conform to their evil desires. Some of them celebrated what is evil in God's sight. They promoted sins against the fifth and sixth commandment with abortion and sexual immorality. It is so easy with a mind unprepared to conform to those evil desires. In ignorant blindness to sin many don't see the dangers. Like Peter's first readers, each one of us was once in ignorance. That was our mindset before coming to faith. But now you see all sin for what it really is: evil and destructive.

Peter lists another reason for living a holy life. We are called to it by a holy Father. He called us from unbelief into his family to be his children. And he says, *"Be holy in all you do... be holy because I am holy."* Every good Father is an example for his child. He does what he wants his child to learn to do. And every child who loves their father wants to be like their father. If he sees his father being kind, loving, and faithful, he will want to be kind, loving, and faithful. How much more shouldn't we imitate the Creator God who is perfectly holy?

And don't downplay the level of imitation which our Father commands. *"Be holy as I am holy."* He isn't saying, *"Be the best you can be," "be better than that guy,"* or *"just do more good things than bad things."* He is telling us to be *like* him. God is absolutely good and holy. He never fails, never lies, never acts in selfish gain, never fails to show mercy, never loves evil. To be like our Father in heaven is to aim and always hit perfection. Do you? Have you?

Thirdly, Peter says we should live out our lives in reverence to God since he doesn't show partiality. We all like to think that we are the exception to sin and are the most special. But don't expect God to only judge the dreadful wrongs of your neighbors but overlook your wrongs. Don't think a holy God is going to judge the murderer, the adulterer, the sexually immoral, but not judge you for your hateful or lustful thoughts or actions. God won't just judge the person who targets children with ungodly library books. He will also judge the Father who thinks he can get away with lovelessness. He sees every time you give a bad example to others. He sees every fault. And he won't say, *"Well, my little Marty has had a tough week. I'm going to give him a free pass to sin."* Sinful earthly father's might do that to their children, but good fathers don't. Our heavenly Father never does. He doesn't show favoritism. We ought to stand in reverence and awe of him as a holy judge who doesn't give us a free pass to sin.

So far Peter has laid down the law pretty thick. He tells us to live as obedient children of our heavenly Father. We should do it because he has called us out of the ignorance of unbelief. We have no excuse for any sin. We know sinful desires are evil. We are called to be holy just as our Father in heaven is holy. That means perfection, not just trying your best. And we know he judges us without partiality. There is no free pass to sin just because you can now call him Father. He will hold every sinner to account. The reasons for holy living abound!

Those reasons alone are enough to make every sinner tremble at their disobedience. How have we done? Have you kept the belt on your brain to be ready for action? Or have you loosened the belt, let evil take hold, and lived as an evil rebellious child of your Father in heaven? He has only been a good Father who called us and who brought us into his family. But how have we responded in turn? In reverent fear we ought to cry, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner." We deserve to be tossed back into the empty way of life we were born into. We deserve his judgment for it all. If he truly is holy, he ought to send us away from his holy presence for all the times we settled for evil.

But Peter gives another reason for us to live a holy life. He not only gives us God's law. He gives us the powerful gospel which empowers a new life as children of God. He gives us faith, hope, and love. The greatest reason we have for living as obedient children is God's own obedient Son. Recall earlier how he has a gift to bring us. Now we consider how he paid for that gift. *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,*¹⁹ *but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*²⁰ *He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.*

Jesus, the Son of the Father, was called to live an obedient life. He was born so that he could keep the law of God. And for all the times that we failed to "be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect" Jesus did not fail. He perfectly lived in absolute holiness. Never once did he sin. That's because he wasn't born with a sinful desire or ignorance. He was born without any sin. He is the holy everlasting Son of the Father. Yet he took on true human flesh and blood. Peter says that he used his holy blood to pay the price of judgment we deserved. We were redeemed from our empty way of life by his perfect holy life, with his innocent suffering and death. In the same way that an unblemished lamb had to be used as a sacrifice in the Old Testament, Jesus offered his blood up once for all. His precious blood paid the price.

God the Father chose his Son to carry out this work before the creation of the world. And he made this truth known to us today. But Peter doesn't end there with the description of the only perfect Son. He says that the Father "*raised him from the dead and glorified him.*" This is already the third time in his letter that Peter has referred to the cross and the crown of Christ. Jesus could not remain in defeat. By his resurrection the Father showed he approved of the work of his Son. The payment for sinners was good! The Son went from cross, to crowning glory. And he did it to bring us out of our sin and the suffering we deserve to join with him and share in his glory.

So, Peter concludes this section, "*your faith and hope are in God.*" This is what drives us to be like our God. In his great love he planned out our rescue. And in willing reverent obedience the one and only true Son of God carried out our rescue plan. He gave himself. Far from the sinful desires of the flesh is the holy desire of our God to give up his life for us! Our faith and our hope are not founded in our holy living. They are founded in the holy Son of God. They are founded in the truth that he bore the cross and now wears the crown of glory. Faith is in what we cannot see but what God has promised. Hope is faith looking forward to what is yet to come. God has promised that we are bought back by the blood of his Son and are promised glory everlasting as a gift. We will see it when Jesus returns.

In the meanwhile, moved by God's rescue we are urged to "*love one another deeply from the heart.*" God our Father isn't just absolutely holy. He is absolute love. He hates sin, but he loves mercy. He will judge evil thoughts and actions, but he mercifully lets the ransom price fall on Christ. He loves us so deeply that it moved him to give us his greatest treasure. With that type of loving Father, we love our brothers and sisters. "*Love one another deeply.*" I can tell you from experience that there is no greater desire for a father than to see his family living together in love. That is what our Father in heaven desires. Our Father pours out his gifts so that we might continue to grow in faith, hope, and love.

Forget Batman. When I think about what I want to be like it is like my God, in perfect holiness and love. What other Father would you consider emulating? He gave his only Son to buy us back from "*the empty way of life handed down by our forefathers.*" Every father from Adam and on has failed in some way. The empty way of life we received was filled with many things that promised paradise, but only ended up in the grave. Even the greatest man who ever bore the title father pales in the bright glorious love of our Father in heaven. The way of life he has given us is altogether new and incredible. It is a way of life guided by faith in him. It is a way of life filled with hope for the future and a glorious eternal home. And it is a way of life filled today and forever with deep love from the heart.

We join with Peter and all the saints as we follow Christ from cross to crown. We do that as the Father fills us with a living faith, hope, and love.