

**Sermon Brief**

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**Text:** 1 Peter 1:13-21

**Title:** “A Holy Hope”

**Subject:** Peter exhorts the believers to live holy lives.

**Complement:** The motivation to holiness is God’s love and holiness.

**Textual Idea:** Peter exhorts the believers to live holy lives in light of God’s love and holiness.

**Sermon Idea:** Live in synch with your identity.

**Interrogative:** Am I living in synch with my identity?

**Key Points:**

1. You’re blessed with a secure inheritance: set your hope on future glory.
2. You’re a part of God’s family: let the Father’s DNA have its way.
3. You’re a temporary resident due to report back home: walk in reverent fear.

**What do I want people to know?** I want people to know that as children of God, they must live lives that reflect the character of God. That requires discipline and remembering that we’ll have to answer for how we live our lives while on earth.

**What do I want people to do?** I want people to (1) remind themselves of their sonship, (2) practice self-discipline over their minds and desires, and (3) refocus on Jesus throughout the day.

**What need am I addressing?** I am addressing the need to live lives that honor God.

## **“A Holy Hope”**

1 Peter 1:13-21

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Years ago, I used to listen to this radio show that started with a corny tune, “Take time to be holy.” I hated it! First of all, it was corny! Second, it didn’t make sense to me. Take time to be holy? You mean like I’ll be holy for the next five minutes but then unholy after that? I know they didn’t mean that but it kind of sounded that way! Lastly, I just don’t like being told to be holy. It makes me depressed and defeated because I know I fall short. Anyone feel the same? Well, bad news. That is what God says through Peter in our passage this morning, “Be holy!” This hope that we’ve been studying so far is to be worked out as a holy hope. But how? Let’s take a look at it.

We’re in a sermon series on the book of 1 Peter which I’ve entitled, **(LCD) Alien Living in a Chaotic World**. Essentially, Peter tells the people in Asia Minor that as believers in Christ, they are temporary residents of this world, a world that is aligned against them. The question is how does one live in that kind of situation? Peter began addressing that in the greeting of his letter by reminding them of **(LCD) who they are in Christ. They are chosen by the Father and empowered by the Spirit to be obedient servants of the Lord Jesus in this world**. That’s who they are. That’s their identity as Spirit-filled, Blood-bought children of God.

Last week, Peter then described how incredible this new identity is in that we now have an amazing **(LCD) eternal benefits package**:

- **Complete forgiveness of sin**
- **Made a son/daughter of Father God**
- **Given an eternal, living hope**
- **Given a perfect, inexhaustible inheritance**
- **24/7, lifelong protection from God**
- **Limitless joy regardless of circumstances**
- **Constant, intimate companionship with God**
- **Participation in heavenly glory now and forever**
- **Privileged access to divine mysteries**

Whew!!! That is who we are and what we’re entitled to as citizens of heaven!

Awesome...except we’re not home yet! How are we supposed to live in this foreign, chaotic land when the value systems of heaven and earth are so different?! In a word, holy. We’re to live holy...but again...how? The first clue to that answer is the first word in our passage today, 1 Peter 1:13 *“Therefore.”* Peter’s about to shift from description to prescription; from explaining our salvation to exhorting us to walk it out in holiness. But you have to keep the connection between who we are, all our rights as sons and daughters, and the coming commands. There are going to be **(LCD) six of them**:

1. **Discipline your minds!**
2. **Exercise self-control!**
3. **Set your hope on grace!**
4. **Don’t let the world/culture shape you!**

5. **Be holy – like God!**
6. **Live your life knowing you'll be judged!**

Looking at those commands by themselves is daunting, we're set up to fail! That's where the "therefore" comes into place. Don't try to obey these commands in your own strength. We can only walk in them if we remember who we are and all we have in Christ. So with that in mind, let's see how we're commanded to live as aliens in a chaotic world. Verse 13, "*Therefore (in light of who you are and all you have in Christ) with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.* 14 *As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.* 15 *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;* 16 *for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."* First, Peter urges the struggling believers to set their hope on the grace that's coming when Jesus returns. That's the main verb in verse 13. In other words, **(LCD) the Lord deals in futures** and the future is bright! Because of the historical fact of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, we can have a confident expectation, hope, that our present suffering for Christ is worthwhile. It will be rewarded when He returns. We'll see more on that later this morning.

And the way we set our hope on this grace is with minds that are alert and fully sober. The first phrase is literally, "gird up the loins of your mind." Weird to us, normal to them. This was a common saying of the day that referred to the Middle Eastern practice of gathering up long robes around the waist to prepare for work or action. It's the equivalent of "roll up your sleeves and get to work." In other words, discipline your minds. Be careful what you're thinking about. The path to holiness starts in the mind. I'm reminded of what Paul said to the Philippians, **(LCD) "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."** You'd do well to commit this verse to memory and to run what you're watching or reading through it. Actually, a few years ago, Bob Blomberg gave me **(LCD) this book called The 4:8 Principle** which walks through this verse and makes the connection between what we think about and how it affects our mood, our actions, everything. Essentially, the author says be a picky thinker! I know that I'm a picky eater, but I need to learn to be a picky thinker too. Not letting any mental junk food in my mind but only eating those thoughts that are consistent with whose we are...children of a holy God!

He also urges the believers to be "fully sober." Some translations put the "fully" with "hope," but it can go either way grammatically. What this phrase means is exercise self-control. Be sober with your appetites – don't go overboard! He says more about that in the next verse, "*As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.*" Notice, Peter is reminding them who they are: children of God, the holy, righteous God, and they've been empowered by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus. So knowing that in Christ we're obedient children, don't slip back into your former way of life. The key to not slipping back is to not conform to our evil desires.

The word here is only used in one other place, **(LCD) Romans 12:2**, “**Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**” There we see again the tie between our thinking and our actions. But here’s what’s interesting. Both here and in our passage, the verb “conform” is in the passive voice which means that it’s best translated as in the Phillip’s translation, **(LCD) “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within...”** In other words, let the Father’s DNA that is inside you as His child do it’s work and make you holy. That’s how we avoid letting the world squeeze us into its sinful mold. Let the Father’s DNA do its thing and that means living in synch with the Spirit of God within us.

It’s what Paul teaches in Galatians, **(LCD) “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”** The key to holiness isn’t “Pick yourself up by your bootstraps and try harder!” It’s allow the Spirit of Holiness planted in you at the new birth by God to have His way. Live in agreement with the Spirit. Let Christ live His life in and through you. I like how Wayne Grudem puts it, **(LCD) “The fact that Peter could give such a command implies that he knew that such desires still remain and have some power in the hearts of true Christians. Yet he also implies that he agrees with Paul that the Holy Spirit’s regenerating work has broken the ruling, dominating force of those desires, and that it is possible for Christians to have a significant measure of victory over them.”** Listen, Christians still struggle with sin. There is some false teaching out there that we can live in perfect obedience now. Don’t believe it. We can’t. If we could, we wouldn’t need a Savior. We aren’t perfect, but we are no longer under sin’s domination anymore which means that we can live free from bondage to sin and in significant victory through faith in Christ and alignment with Him.

In the past, I’ve illustrated this with the story of the **(LCD) Frog Prince**. Remember his story? A prince who lived a royal life was cursed and became a frog. He stayed that way until one day he was kissed by a princess and was transformed into a frog again. Awesome! But imagine if he decided to go back down to the pond, take off his royal clothes, put on his tiny frog suit (which doesn’t fit him anymore because he’s a man, not a frog) and try jumping around like he used to when he was a frog! Crazy! That’s what it’s like when we go back to our sinful lives. We’re not frogs anymore! We’re royal princes and princesses! **(LCD) Live in synch with your identity** as Spirit-filled, blood bought children of Almighty God! Amen!

In contrast to being conformed to our evil desires, Peter exhorts us to walk in our Father’s footsteps, verse 15, “*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”* Again, let Father’s DNA have its way in you. We are now born of God through faith in Christ. The Spirit of God is within us. He is holy – meaning He’s entirely different from us, from another realm, and He’s completely pure. There is nothing evil or sinful in Him. When we live in synch with Him, when we agree with His Spirit in us, when let His powerful, holy Word sink deeply in our hearts and minds, we start looking like Him. He’s holy so we start to look holy.

And this holiness is to extend to every part of our lives; verse 15, “be holy in all you do.” The word here, apostrophe, is used six times by Peter in this letter. He’s imploring them to let God have his way in every part of their lives: their worship, their service, their work, their play, their TV watching, their thinking, everything! The Father’s DNA is meant to be expressed through us in everything! Reminds me of that worship song we used to sing: **(LCD) God in my living, There in my breathing, God in my waking, God in my sleeping, God in my resting, There in my working, God in my thinking, God in my speaking, Be my ev'rything, Be my ev'rything, Be my ev'rything, Be my ev'rything. Christ in me, Christ in me, Christ in me, the Hope of Glory, You are ev'rything.** And that’s the key right there. We can’t be holy by our own self-effort but with Christ in us, He can. As we align with Jesus, set our minds on things above, discipline ourselves to be in synch with the Spirit, Christ in us comes out. And when that happens, He comes out in every part of our lives. Amen.

So the key is focusing on God’s power, not our sin. Another way of thinking of holiness is that of separation. When something is holy, it is separated out for exclusive use. When I **(LCD) married Diane**, we were separated from all others unto each other exclusively. That’s why it’s called HOLY matrimony! When it comes to God, we are made holy, separated unto Him exclusively. This is key to understand when we think about the command to be holy. I like what Ernest Best said, **(LCD) “The idea of separation is separation TO God rather than separation FROM the world: naturally, separation to God means separation from sin because God and sin have no common meeting point.”** See, we can focus our attention on holiness being separate FROM the world (I better not lust, I better not swear, I better not be jealous) or we can focus our attention on the fact that we’ve been separated TO God. Focus on Him. His love, His grace, His mercy, His kindness, etc... This is a much more effective focus. When we focus on Him, we won’t want to do anything that offends Him.

But we still do...which is why Peter makes the next point; verse 17, “*Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.*” Peter is reminding them again that they are “foreigners,” aliens, living in a foreign land. They need to remember that because some day they’ll be headed back home and when they do, they’ll need to answer for anything that sullied the family name while we were here. And it won’t matter that we’re sons and daughters because God shows no favoritism.

I used to tell my sons that all they did and said reflected on our family. “Remember, you’re a Riendeau! Live in a way that brings honor to our house.” That’s the idea here. Living holy means living in a way that is consistent with our family’s values. When we don’t, we bring dishonor to our Father’s name and, when we get home, we’ll need to answer for that. Paul describes this future judgment, **(LCD) “So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”** Now this could bring a sense of shame, right? Are we really going to be ashamed at the Father’s

judgment seat? That doesn't sound like heaven! Take a look at **(LCD) this guy**. He cheated on his girlfriend so as punishment, he made him go to the mall and wear this sign! Is that what our experience at the judgment seat of God is going to be like? Andre did what?! No way!!

Exactly, no way. Yes, there will be a judgment, but there will be no more condemnation or shame. The blood of Christ will have dealt with all my sin. This is talking about the rewards which await us at the throne of God. We won't be shamed, but we might miss out on tremendous rewards which is why Peter urges these believers, and us, to live in reverent fear. Not the fear of eternal damnation, that fear has been blown away by God's perfect love; but the fear that takes God seriously because God is so overwhelming! The kind of fear that Isaiah had when he stood before God and fell on his face saying, "Woe is me!" And the kind of fear that Isaiah still had after God took away his sin which is what Peter encourages us with next.

*Verse 18, "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. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God."* "For" points to the reason or motivation for this reverent fear. Not only because of impending judgment, but also because of the costly and stupendous mercy of God displayed in the pouring out of the precious blood of Jesus for our sin. Jesus was a perfect sacrificial lamb, without blemish or defect, perfect; and His sacrifice redeemed us, literally bought us out of bondage to sin and death and our former, purposeless lives. We were bought with the most precious thing in the universe – the blood of perfection! We are valued so much that God paid that much! Wow!

And Jesus was chosen to be this sacrifice BEFORE the creation of the world. Do you understand that? Before creation, God had already ordained that His Son would suffer for us! And then, to the envy of the prophets of old and the angels, this chosen Son was revealed, in the flesh, to the people of Peter's time for their sake. There is so much there but just think about that. The Father loves YOU and if you ever doubt that just look at the cross! See the love of the God poured out for you! You are loved! That is the best motivation for holy living!

The result, verse 21, is that through Jesus, through His life, death and resurrection, the physical evidence of the love and holiness of God, we've come to believe in the God whose done all this for us. And so our faith and hope are in God. Even our faith comes from God. It's all God, beginning to end. Our job is to stay aligned with Him. So let me summarize all this with these **(LCD) three points**:

- 1. You're blessed with a secure inheritance: set your hope on future glory.**
- 2. You're a part of God's family: let the Father's DNA have its way.**
- 3. You're a temporary resident due to report back home: walk in reverent fear.**

Remember who you are: chosen by the Father, empowered by the Spirit to be obedient to the Lord Jesus. Review your benefits package often. Live in synch with your calling by remembering these three points. Let me close by suggesting that you find a way to refocus on who you are throughout the day. Wenda Lagan introduced me to an app by John Eldredge called **(LCD) PAUSE**. Twice a day, 10am and 2pm, I get prompted to stop what I'm doing take time to release everything to God, restore my union with God and invite him to fill me. It has been extremely helpful in helping me to live as an alien in a chaotic world. Let's pray.