

Studies in 1 Peter-04 1 Peter 1:14-20

by Dwight Pentecost

The Christian's new birth brings a settled assurance of hope and a new destiny, with a call to holiness and separation from the world.

Duration: 27:03

Scripture: Exodus 12:13-15, Leviticus 11:44, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Holy Living", "Salvation Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of believers living a holy life, as God is holy. He highlights that many people struggle to accept the simplicity of the gospel message, which states that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone. The preacher urges the audience to personally receive Jesus Christ as their Savior, comparing it to receiving a gift. He then refers to the book of 1 Peter, where the apostle Peter reminds believers of their ancient history and the exodus from Egypt, using it as a lesson to teach them spiritual truths. The preacher concludes by emphasizing that believers have experienced the miracle of the new birth and therefore have an obligation to be like their heavenly Father.

Transcript

The Apostle Peter, writing to persecuted saints of his day, reminds them that they have been born of God as children into God's family, and the new birth that they have been given includes within it a hope. The hope, the settled assurance that has been given to them through the gospel, is that because Jesus Christ lives, they shall live also. Peter is directing their attention away from the burdens, the trials, the circumstances in which they find themselves to the destiny that God has put before them.

For as long as they live in the midst of enemy's territory, they can expect to be assailed by the enemy. Peter reminds them that this is not their destiny, for they have been begotten unto a living hope. This hope is enjoyed in the midst of the present circumstances of life.

This hope was given to them to sustain them, that they might live with joy, that they might live in faith, they might live with confidence. But as Peter moves on in the first chapter of this epistle, he reminds these persecuted saints that the new birth that they have received from the Father places a great obligation upon them. They have been begotten not only unto a living hope, but they have been begotten unto a holy life.

And as we come to that portion that occupies our attention this morning, 1 Peter 1, verses 14-20, Peter lays upon them this obligation, verse 14, as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. You will observe that Peter's exhortation rests upon the fact that they have been born into the family of God. He says to them, as obedient children, one becomes a child of God in only one way, that is, by personally receiving Jesus Christ as one's own Savior.

When one receives Christ as a personal Savior, the miracle of the new birth takes place, and as wonderful and marvelous as the fact of human birth, so miraculous and marvelous is the fact of a second supernatural birth. The one who receives Jesus Christ as a personal Savior becomes a child of God by that birth, the same way your child became your child by the fact of a natural and human birth. And because there is a change in the circumstances of life in the womb and life in the world in the physical sense, so the Apostle Peter says there is a change from life before one became a Christian and life after one became a Christian, or before the new birth and after the new birth.

And viewing those for whom Peter has a shepherd responsibility, he reminds them, first of all, of this great fact that they have experienced the miracle of miracles, the miracle of the new birth. Now, because of that fact, an obligation rests upon them. The obligation can be summarized simply to be like their father, to be like their father, for the father delights and desires to reproduce himself in his own children.

He has given them his own nature, that his nature should live his life through his children. And the Apostle Peter, to try to get this great fact across to these believers, takes them in their thought back to the experience of their forefathers when they were still in the land of Egypt, and he wants to remind them of that great fact of their ancient history, the facts associated with the exodus out of Egypt, in order that he might apply history to their experience to teach them spiritual truths through what happened to their forefathers. He reminds them that when God gave the law to the children of Israel, it was with these words, being holy, for I am holy.

This quotation comes to us from Leviticus chapter 11 and verse 44, which, when we read it in its original context, is set in the midst of the laws concerning diet that God gave to the children of Israel. But Peter, in his mind, is going back to that actual experience of the reception of the law at Sinai, and he is reminding them of all that God did to the children of Israel when they were bond slaves in Egypt. Back in the book of Exodus, the whole divine dealing with the nation Israel is traced in detail, but there were certain steps that we can see.

You turn, for instance, to the first verse of the 11th chapter of Hosea, and Hosea says, out of Egypt have I called my son. Hosea is referring to Israel's experience when they were bond slaves in Egypt. They had no hope of deliverance.

Their servitude had gone on for hundreds of years, and from any natural expectation, it would continue on for hundreds of years, for who could rebel against the might of Pharaoh? But when they were there as bond slaves, God called Israel, and God's call offered them a deliverance, and it was not until they responded to the call of God and set their faces away from Egypt toward the land of promise that there was any deliverance that was offered to them. God called Israel, and then when God said, in effect, to an oppressed people, as our Lord said later, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, the nation said, We believe God. We believe that God would not deceive us, and if he said we should go into the wilderness, we can believe him, and we must go.

It was when God called and Israel answered that God redeemed the nation. I go back into the fifteenth chapter of the book of Exodus, and there I read this significant word in verse 13. Thou in mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed.

Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The significant words there are, the people which thou hast redeemed. We are reminded this morning that when God called a people and offered them deliverance, God provided the Passover land, and the blood of the Passover land must be placed on the lintels in the doorpost of the house, and then those who were within that house must put themselves under the protection and the safety of that shed blood.

When God passed through the land and saw the blood, the death sentence was lifted, and those within that house were protected from divine judgment. That was a redemption which God provided through a sacrificial land for those who would believe God. On the next morning, when the children of Israel left Egypt and headed toward an impassable sea, they were leaving Egypt because of a blood redemption.

They were leaving Egypt in faith that God would open up the way in which they should go. They were trusting God for every physical and spiritual provision, for they took nothing with them to sustain themselves in the wilderness. God called them.

God redeemed them. When we turn again to Isaiah 43, the prophet, centuries later, is still looking back to this glorious fact of a redemption that was provided. In Isaiah 43, we have the word, "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee.

I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.' And then, because God had called and they had obeyed, and God had provided redemption and they had believed, God promised preservation to the nation that left the land and to their children after them. So that Isaiah, looking back to God's call and God's redemption, says, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior.' Now, when the children of Israel had obeyed God and had believed God and came out into the wilderness of Sinai, God laid an obligation upon them." We turn into the book of Leviticus, as we suggested a moment ago, in Leviticus chapter 11, and there in the heart of the regulations which God gave to the nation.

Leviticus 11, verse 41, we begin our reading, "Every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth shall be an abomination, it shall not be eaten. Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, then ye shall not eat, for they are an abomination. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable, that is, unclean, with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them that ye should be defiled thereby, for I am the Lord your God.

Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy. Neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping things that creepeth upon the earth, for I am the Lord that bringeth you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." There at Sinai, where God revealed His holiness through the law to the children of Israel, God said to the Israelites, "There are certain things you can eat, and certain things that you cannot eat.

I am making a distinction between what is clean and what is unclean, and you must observe to eat what is clean and to refrain from eating what is unclean, because if you eat the unclean, you will become unclean.

And I am holy, therefore I require conformity to my regulations and my restrictions, for I am a holy God." Now, what was the problem? The children of Israel had grown up in Egypt. The customs they knew were the customs of Egypt.

The diet that they knew was the diet of Egypt. The practices that they knew were the practices of Egypt. The gods that they knew were the gods of Egypt, and their life was molded by the environment in which they had grown up, in which they had been schooled and trained, and according to the customs and practices and beliefs of the society in which they found themselves.

But, Egypt had unholy gods, and unholy practices, and unholy law, and unholy diet. God said, "I have redeemed you. I called you, and you believed me, you obeyed me.

I redeemed you when you believed me. Now I'm calling you out from that whole environment, that whole atmosphere, that whole system of thinking and living, and you can no longer do what you used to do, and eat what you used to eat, and believe what you used to believe, because I redeemed you, and I am holy, and brought you to myself as mine own. Therefore, be ye holy as I am holy." The nation was called, they obeyed.

The nation was redeemed, they believed. Then the nation was separated from their own manner and pattern of life, because they had been redeemed. Now, will you turn again to the first chapter of 1 Peter, and see how Peter uses this experience back in the wilderness? For, he says, verse 15, God has called you.

He's talking to that generation that had heard the gospel, the generation to whom Peter and the other apostles and evangelists had witnessed. God had called them, and God had said to them in that day what he said to a nation in bond slavery in Egypt, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' And they obeyed God. They turned to Jesus Christ, they responded to the call that God gave to them." With what result? Verse 17, "'Ye call on the Father.' Christ called them through his death to himself, and they in turn called upon him.' And the call is an act of faith.

It is not a work, it is simply believing the offer of salvation that Jesus Christ makes to sinful man. So, God called them as he called Israel in Egypt, and God provided a redemption for them. Verse 18, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ." What kind of a life did we receive from our fathers? Going all the way back to Adam, we were born into a world of sin.

We were born sinners with a sin nature. That was the tradition, the kind of life we received from our fathers all the way back to Adam. And when we were in sin and uncleanness, when we were separated from God, when we were lost, God provided a redemption.

It was not a redemption for good people, for rich people, for successful people, for nice people. It was a redemption for sinners. God provided, and the apostle reminds his generation that as Israel had been called when they were bond slaves, so we were called when we were bond slaves to sin.

That when we had no righteousness, no merit to offer to God, God provided redemption. For we could no more redeem ourselves from sin than Israel could redeem themselves from slavery needed. But God, knowing our inability, provided redemption for us.

But with what were we redeemed? The apostle is thinking back into the Old Testament to the fact that there in God's old order there was no redemption apart from blood, no redemption apart from sacrifice of a life. Israel was not redeemed from Egypt because of the material wealth that they had. Do you remember the night before the deliverance from Egypt, God told the Israelites to go to their masters and to collect all their back wages? And the Israelites went out of Egypt and enriched people because they carried with them the accumulated wages of years in gold and silver and jewels.

But it was not the material wealth that they carried in their hands that redeemed them from Egypt. They were redeemed because an animal blood covered their sin. And if God could not redeem a people from physical bondage without shedding of blood, who could conceive that God could or would redeem a sinner from sin without the shedding of blood? He reminds these people that they were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold.

For silver and gold, you realize, come from the bowels of the earth, and this whole earth was cursed because of Adam's sin. The faith in God said, cursed be the ground for thy sake, and as valuable as that jewel on your finger is to you, it is an accursed thing because it comes from an accursed earth, and as much store as you set by your silver and your gold in the sight of God, it is an accursed thing because it comes from an accursed earth. You cannot offer to God that which is a curse for your salvation.

What could redeem the sinner? That upon which men set store does not necessarily have any value in the sight of God whatsoever, but God provided a redeemer and provided a redemption. That redeemer is his own son, and the redemption is through the shedding of the blood of his son. So, Peter reminds them that just as they have been called, and God asks for obedience to the call, and just as God provided a redemption for Israel in servitude, so God has provided a redeemer for men in servitude to sin.

And that redemption, verse 19, is the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Precious blood. And the blood of Christ is precious because of the one who shed his blood.

It is not precious because you esteem it highly. It is precious blood because God esteems it highly. It is precious, first of all, to God, and can be precious to a believer or to a sinner only because it is precious in the sight of God.

The value of the blood of Christ is not the value that you put on it. The value of the blood of Christ is the value which God puts on it, and God said of the blood of Christ as it dropped from his wounds to the ground at Calvary, this to me is precious blood because my son is precious to me. And that precious blood was spilled in order that God might provide a redemption for sinful men, and as God called Israel while they were in bondage, God calls you.

And as God provided a redemption for Israel when they were in servitude, so God has provided a redemption for you. There's nothing you can ask, there's nothing you can bring because Jesus Christ's blood totally matters by God. But because we have been called, because we have been redeemed, God says, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

You were born in this world. You accepted its patterns, its standards, its practices, its habits. You were a worldling by virtue of your natural birth, but as God took Israel to Sinai to separate them from that old life because they had been redeemed, and God said to them, there are certain things you can do and certain things you cannot do.

So God takes the one who has been called and who has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and says, Now I give you a new standard. Don't look at the world and see what the world does and conclude that you can do it. You look at me, what you see in me, that you do.

Be ye holy, for I am holy. Men still refuse to believe God. The news that Christ died for the sins of the world seems to the worldling to be so simple.

The good news that Christ will completely save an individual who does no more than to trust Jesus Christ for his salvation seems to be too easy. But God asks you to take him at his word that the one who does nothing more than to believe God's promise and to trust Jesus Christ for salvation, that one is redeemed by precious blood. Let me ask you this directly and personally.

Have you personally received Jesus Christ as your Savior? Have you ever received Christ the same way you receive a gift when the gift is offered to you? You simply extend your hand because you believe the offerer meant what he said when he said, This is for you. And you extended your hand, you took it, and your only response was, Thank you. God offers you a faith, and if you by faith will take Jesus Christ as your own personal faith, you're redeemed.

And all God asks of you is, Thank you for Jesus. It's our privilege as God's children to gather around the table of the Lord. This table was provided to give us a memorial of Christ's death, and the memorial of his blood that was shed.

And as we gather to fellowship with him, may it be to remember the one who shed what God calls precious blood, in order that we might have forgiveness of sin. We were called to life, we were called to hope, we were called to holiness. May the Spirit of God, our Father, direct our thoughts into these truths of the Word, and as we remember again the one whose body was broken and blood was shed, that we have been redeemed, but not with a curse of things, but with blood that is precious in the sight of God.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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