

Staying Clean In A Polluted World

1 Peter 1:10-17

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Let's read 1 Peter 1:10-12. We're going to cover verses 10-17, but to get us started Peter says, "Of which salvation"—note that word 'salvation,' it's a key word. As I pointed out, from verses 3-12 the whole subject is it introduces the epistle is about rejoicing in our salvation. "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow,"—that's His first and Second Coming or advent. Verse 12, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

The subject matter, again, is rejoicing in our salvation. Why is that the subject matter? The subject matter is rejoicing in our salvation because they were suffering saints. They were going through trials, tribulations, and difficulties. They weren't going through what prophetically, or theologians say eschatologically, is the great tribulation which comes from God on a Christ-rejecting world will be seven years before this Second Coming, they were going through tribulation that Jesus predicted, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

The difference is the tribulation we have now as Christians comes from the world, comes from the flesh, and comes from the devil. There are two different sources. One is God's wrath poured out upon a Christ-rejecting world, and the Bible says, "For God hath not appointed us"—His children—"to wrath, but to obtain"—here's our word—"salvation," but we do go through times of tribulation, trials, and sufferings, and we've looked at that for two weeks. Because the subject matter doesn't change from verses 3-12, it's important to keep that in context, and verses 13-17 he speaks about our response to so great a salvation. The word "salvation" is mentioned in verses 5, 9, and 10. The subject is rejoicing in your salvation even though right now, " . . . if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations"—trials or testings. That's the point.

The first section is verses 10-12, and we see that salvation and Scripture are tied together—the theme of Scripture from beginning to end is God saving us by His grace. Someone said, and you've heard me quote it before, "Cut the Bible anywhere, and it bleeds; it is red with redemptive truth." It's the scarlet thread that runs from Genesis to Revelation. The Bible is all about God's redemptive plan. If you talked about what's called the metanarrative, the whole big picture of the Bible, it's God saving us, redeeming us back to Himself. We have fallen. We need to be redeemed, saved, and brought back into fellowship with God. We were chosen by the Father, we've been sanctified by the Spirit, and we've been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ; therefore, we are on our way to heaven. We need to be thankful and rejoice.

We have a salvation that is so great that it was four things, if you're taking notes. This is a great note-taking message, and again I think the points will appear on the screen, but they're taken from the text. Because our salvation is so great, the first is it was the theme of the Old Testament prophets. The prophets predicted it. If you just want to write that down, the prophets predicted it. The Old Testament prophets predicted our great salvation. Go back with me at verse 10, this is the point, "Of which salvation"—as I said, mentioned again in verses 5 and 9, but now again your salvation—"the prophets"—there they are, this is Old Testament prophets—"have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied"—they spoke—"of the grace that should come unto you."

There's a lot that could be said about each one of these points, and I'm going to try to discipline myself as best I can not to get bogged down in too many particulars or specifics, but our salvation is not an afterthought. Our salvation, God's redemptive plan, God's redemptive program, is not an afterthought. When God created Adam and Eve, He knew they would fall, and right away He predicted that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. It was the first messianic prophecy all the way back in the Garden of Eden. God didn't get caught off guard and say, "Oh, no! Man blew it! What am I going to do?" He's got this plan. He's got this redemptive plan that in some amazing way is going to bring greater glory to God when we get to heaven.

Right now we see through a glass dimly, but Paul says in Corinthians that some day when we get to heaven we'll see clearly, face to face. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part," but one day we will see clearly. We know that there's this metanarrative, this megaplan. When we get to heaven I have this suspicion that not only are we going to be caught up in the glory and the splendor and beauty of heaven, but we're going to be overwhelmed with gratitude to God's master plan, God's wisdom, and the beauty of God's redemptive plan. Some people despise the cross and despise the death of Christ and think it's foolishness to them, but we who are saved know it's the power of God to salvation. Amen? I just have this sense that based on Scripture that when we get to heaven, it's going to be more than we could ever fathom, ever comprehend because we're going to know as we are known, and we're going to understand the beauty and the majesty of God's redeeming grace.

So, it was not an afterthought, but the prophets spoke of it. Isaiah 53 spoke of, ". . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . and with his stripes we are healed." I mean, that's the cross. That's substitutionary atonement. That's what the New Testament teaches, but it started way back in the Old Testament when the prophets prophesied of those things.

Now, just a quick footnote, again, how were people in the Old Testament saved? The answer is quite simple, by grace through faith. Do you know that even in the Old Testament they basically had to believe God's promise in a future Redeemer, and God then imputed righteousness to them by faith; and the big picture of that is used by Paul in Galatians, which is the subject of salvation by grace through faith, is that of Abraham who believed God and God did what? God imputed or reckoned, it's the doctrine of imputation, God reckoned or imputed to Abraham

righteousness. There's the foundation of justification by faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone. Even in the Old Testament they were saved by grace through faith just as we are saved by grace through faith. What a picture that is of the prophets who spoke of, look at verse 10, "... the grace that should come unto you." It seems as though he's putting it in a future tense because the Old Testament was prophesying of that; but you know as Christians, when the Lord Jesus returns, that's the future sense when God's grace comes to us and we have the third phase of our salvation which is our glorification when we go to be with Christ in heaven.

Here's the second thing about the greatness of our salvation, verse 11, it's the theme of the Spirit's inspiration. It was preached by the prophets, verse 10, and it was inspired by the Holy Spirit, verse 11. Look at that. "Searching what, or what manner of time"—and here's the reference to the Holy Spirit—"the Spirit of Christ"—now, don't let that throw you for a curve. The "Spirit of Christ" here is a term for the Holy Spirit, so he does speak also of the Spirit as well. It's a reference to the Holy Spirit, "... which was in them"—that is, the Old Testament prophets—"did signify, when it testified beforehand"—two things, that Christ the Messiah would suffer, the cross, His first coming—"... and the glory that should follow."

This is a great spot in the Bible where you have the two advents, the two comings of Christ, "... the sufferings ... and the glory that should follow." The gap between those two statements already has been over two thousand years. There's a 2,000-year gap between those two statements. A lot of people stumble and get confused because they don't realize He came the first time to suffer and die on the cross, our redemptive atoning sacrifice; and then He's coming back, the end of verse 11, in glory, that's the Second Coming, and that's our future grace that will come to us when Christ returns. What a great salvation! The prophets spoke about it, the Holy Spirit inspired it. They talked about the first coming of Christ and the Second Coming of Christ. What a marvelous truth that is.

Here's the third, our great salvation is the theme of the apostles' preaching. It's the theme of the apostles' preaching and should be the theme of our preaching today as well. Look at verse 12, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves,"—being the Old Testament prophets—"but unto us"—the New Testament believers—"they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit," and as I said, we have the Spirit of Christ in verse 11, now we have the apostles' preaching by the power of the Holy Spirit in verse 12, "... with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven"—I love that—"which things the angels desire to look into."

These verses are so amazing! I know you sometimes wonder, why does Pastor John preach from the King James Bible? Why doesn't he get a modern translation? Again, my first response is I have read the King James Bible and been taught to memorize it from the time I was a very young boy. I personally believe it's the most quotable, easy to memorize of any translations, and I realize that tonight in this text it's kind of worded real King Jimmy and kind of difficult to interpret, so feel free to get a NASB or another translation that is maybe more up to date or modern. You can do that, but it's not going to change the meaning of the text. Anyway, you can't teach old dogs new tricks. I've been preaching for 51 years from the King Jimmy, and

most likely I'll die with a King James Bible in my hand. I'm not King James only by any means, as you can tell, but anyway, just be patient with me.

Peter says in verse 11 that there was “. . . the sufferings . . . and the glory that should follow,” the Spirit's inspiration, but then as I said in verse 12, it's the theme of the apostles' preaching. The apostles proclaimed it, “. . . by them that have preached the gospel”—the good news —“unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven”—I love that!

As you read in the book of Acts, and Peter on the day of Pentecost, he stood up after the Holy Spirit came from heaven, and he gave that Pentecostal sermon and three thousand souls were added to the church. There is no substitute for the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We can print it, we can put it in movies, we can put it in music, but there's no substitute for the God-ordained method of a man of God, preaching the Word of God, through the power of the Spirit of God. It is the biblical method by which sinners hear the gospel and come to salvation. How will they hear unless someone be sent? How will they be sent unless they are called to preach? How will they preach but by sharing the gospel? The whole thing that “. . . faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,” which actually is a reference to the Word preached, the Word proclaimed, so we must all be busy, especially pastors, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was the preaching of the apostles, and I believe it should be the same preaching for us today, so it's not a new message. It doesn't have to be readjusted for our culture. It's the same gospel. It doesn't need to be watered down or diluted or changed.

I love listening to old evangelistic sermons of Billy Graham, and seeing him holding his Bible and preach saying, “The Bible says,” and quoting Scripture and preaching the Word of God. What a marvelous thing that is, and so many people have come to faith in Christ through the preaching of the gospel, this marvelous message of our salvation.

Fourthly, and lastly, our marvelous salvation is seen in the theme of the angels' examination or the angels pondered it. It's like this: The prophets predicted it, the Spirit inspired it, the apostles preached or proclaimed it, and the angels, verse 12, ponder it or looked into it, “. . . the angels desire to look into.” That is one of the most amazing statements.

Do you know the angels are fascinated that God saves sinners? Do you know that when we gather like we have tonight, angels are here? They're listening to us sing in worship, they're listening to us preach the Word. They're observing how we live. They're in awe. They're amazed that God would condescend to save sinful humanity. I think there's angels scratching their head in heaven, and when an angel scratches his head it goes, (making a squeaking noise), because it's scratching with a wing. I'm kidding. They look at John Miller and go, (more squeaking noises) “God, how could You save such a dodo bird, such a sinner as that John Miller?” Don't laugh too hard, he says the same thing about you. Angels are bending down from heaven looking, listening, in awe.

When we get to heaven, do you know what the angels are going to do? They're going to listen to us sing the song of redemption. They're going to fold their wings and listen to the Church,

the bride of Christ, worship the King of kings and the Lord of lords. They're going to be in awe, and we're going to see those marvelous created beings of angels when we get to heaven. So, they're looking into this. They're amazed by this redemptive plan of God. This is a picture of the wonder and the marvel of our salvation for which when we are going through times of testings and trials and suffering, we should rejoice and give thanks to God for.

Here's the second section, verses 13-17, which is putting it into shoe leather, the application section, our response to so great a salvation, our response to so great a salvation. Notice how it starts, "Wherefore"—whenever there's a 'wherefore' you find out what it's there for, and it's therefore because we have so great a salvation, this is what we should do. Follow with me in your Bible. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober,"—these are all imperative commands—"and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"—that's the Second Coming. Then, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts"—your sinful life before Christ when you lived—"in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy,"—notice that—"so be ye holy in all manner of conversation,"—again, this is King James for manner of living or how you live—"Because it is written,"—the reference is Leviticus 11:44—"Be ye holy; for I am holy. 17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work,"—and what you should do is you should be passing—"the time of your sojourning here"—how you live here in this world—"in"—reverence or in—"fear."

These verses, and you see it with the 'wherefore,' put this doctrine in shoe leather. How should we live in light of so great a salvation? Well, it tells us here that we should live in holiness, verse 15, " . . . be ye holy in all manner of"—behavior or—"conversation." In the old English the word "conversation" meant how you lived, not how you speak which should be holy, but how you live your life.

Let me just say a couple quick thoughts about holiness. That God is holy is the number one referred to attribute of God in the Bible. Now, when I say "attribute," I mean something that could be attributed to God's nature, something that is true about God. If God is anything, the Bible says, God is holy. You say, "Well, what does holy mean?" Holy has two aspects. It means the complete absence of anything sinful or evil. It means that there's no sin, no evil, no darkness in God at all. God is perfect. Everything God does is perfectly holy. The positive side means that He's completely true and righteous, so there's no sin—negative; there's perfect righteousness—positive. You could build your life on that.

Whatever comes into your life, whatever happens to you, you—bedrock foundation—know God is holy. Whatever God allows is right and just and pure and holy. Read Isaiah 6, "In the year that king Uzziah died"—the prophet—"saw . . . the Lord . . . high and lifted up, and his"—glory—"filled the temple,"—and he heard the angels saying—" . . . Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." God is holy, and that's the chief attribute of God.

When it comes to this attribute of God as being holy, it's one of what is called a communicable attribute of God meaning—listen carefully—that we can be holy as well. Now, we can't be

perfectly, absolutely holy as God here now in our bodies, our holiness is progressing in our sanctification. But we can be holy like God, this is why He said, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” Now, I can’t be omniscient. I can’t be omnipresent. I can’t be omnipotent, but I can be holy. You can also be loving like God is love, so we can be loving. God is merciful; we can be merciful. God is kind; we can be kind. Those are communicable attributes of God that we can possess. What he’s saying in this passage is children should be like their Father in heaven. If God is holy, God’s people should be marked by holiness as well. It’s so very, very important.

Peter gives us three incentives. Again, here’s your time to take notes. He gives three incentives to walk in holiness. Write them down. First, Jesus Christ is coming again, or the coming of Jesus Christ, verse 13. So, what we should do in light of the Lord’s coming? It’s called “. . . the revelation of Jesus Christ,” we should “gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation”—the unveiling, the apocalypse—“of Jesus Christ.”

Basically, it’s saying that a motive right now for you and me as Christians to live holy lives is that Jesus Christ is coming back. This is why this doctrine is so important—for many reasons, but this is one of them—it is a motivation to purity. “And every man that hath this hope in him”—the coming of the Lord—“purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” If you really believe that Jesus Christ is coming back, how should you then live? Certainly, not in sinful lifestyle, but in holiness and true godliness. Amen?

Now, how is the Lord coming back? He’s coming back for the Church in the rapture, and I believe that the Bible teaches in the rapture of the Church. It’s not the Second Coming, it’s when the Lord comes back in the clouds and catches the Church up to meet Him in the air. It’s not the Lord returning to earth, it’s Him catching the bride, the Church, up to heaven to meet Him in the air. It’s mentioned in John 14, 1 Corinthians 15, and 1 Thessalonians 4 where Paul says, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be”—here’s our word—“caught up”—it’s the Greek word *harpázō* —“. . . to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

I don’t know about you, but I could dig this, right? You say, “I haven’t got married yet.” It doesn’t matter. “I haven’t made a million dollars yet.” Why would you care? “I haven’t visited places I wanna go yet.” It doesn’t matter. I’d rather go to heaven. Amen? Now, if we don’t go up in the rapture, we go the way of death, “. . . to be absent from the body,”—is to be—“present with the Lord.” So, that’s another motivation for living a holy life. But then He comes back in the Second Coming, at least seven years afterwards, after the tribulation to establish His Kingdom on earth for one thousand years. It’s the Davidic kingdom which will flow into the eternal state. But it’s our living hope, verse 3, and we have that hope that the Lord will come again.

Write down 1 John 3:3, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” Then, notice this, that in light of the Lord’s coming, verse 13, again, I can’t tarry on them, you should “. . . gird up the loins of your mind.” That’s a freaky statement. What “loins”

do I have in my mind? What does he mean? This is a word picture. It's a figure of speech from the oriental world where everyone wore robes. I'm glad I didn't live in the oriental world. I'd have to wear a robe (you'd see my legs), no thank you. But everyone, men and women it doesn't matter, they all wore robes. When you wanted to move fast or you had work to do, especially the men, you would pull the robe up, tuck it under your belt, and it would go from a robe to a miniskirt. It's the same as today saying, "Roll up your sleeves and get to work." It's the same as saying, "Roll up your sleeves and get to work," take " . . . the loins of your mind,"—the things that can get caught up by sinful thoughts and bring them into captivity. Why? Because Jesus Christ is coming back, so pulling together your sinful thoughts.

Someone said, "Loose garments may trip a person up and cause them to stumble; even loose thinking is equally perilous, it can lead to a sinful stumble or fall." I've done weddings before where brides are coming down the aisle stepping up on the stage, and if they don't lift their bride dress up a little bit, they can step on it and face plant. I've seen it happen. So, " . . . gird up the loins of your mind," it means bringing thoughts into captivity. One commentary I read used the illustration of Absalom's long hair getting caught in the tree, getting tangled up—like our thoughts getting tangled on the things of the world and weighing us down, so bringing thoughts into the captivity of Christ.

Colossians 3:1-2 says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection"—which is your mind—"on things above, not on things on the earth." That's what it means to " . . . gird up the loins of your mind." Then, in light of Christ's coming, verse 13, " . . . be sober"—again, a figure of speech, don't be drunk on the world and the world's philosophies and the world's thoughts. Thirdly, " . . . hope to the end,"—it's actually have a hopeful outlook. Vine's translates this "favorable and confident expectation." Kenneth Wuest translates this, "Set your hope perfectly unchangeably, without doubt and dependency," so get your mind focused on the things of God. Notice he mentions, verse 13, " . . . the grace that is,"—and literally in the Greek, being—"brought unto you." Again, the three phases of salvation: been saved by grace, being sanctified by grace, and we'll be glorified by grace.

Now, notice the second motivation is in verses 14-16, that God is holy. We read it in the text, God is holy. Look at verse 14, "As obedient children,"—so we're the children of God—"not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance,"—don't live the way you used to live, don't live like your old sinful lifestyle—"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written,"—I quoted Leviticus 11:44—"Be ye holy; for I am holy," says the Lord. It means don't fashion yourself after the old life. Don't imitate the world as you once did on the lusts of the flesh and living in ignorance.

Verse 15, it's actually in every kind of behavior. J.B. Phillips renders this every department of your life. So, every facet of your life should be lived in holiness. As we go through the book of 1 Peter, we're to be holy in our sanctification, we're to be holy in sincere love, we're to be holy in submission to others, we're to be holy in suffering for Christ, and we're to be holy in our service to the Lord.

Here it is, last but not least, verse 17, the fear of the Lord. What should motivate us to live holy? Jesus is coming again, God is holy, and we should live our lives in fear of the Lord. Look at verse 17. It says, “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work,”—when it says He’s without respect of persons, it means that He doesn’t judge anyone by their appearance, He judges righteously. It says, “. . . according to every man’s work,”—this is what we’re to do—“pass the time of your sojourning here”—which is our pilgrim’s journey as Christians on earth—“in fear,”—or reverential fear of the Lord.

Notice that we are called “sojourners,” to have a home alongside of is what that word means. We’re living in the world alongside non-Christians, and we should understand this world is not our home. As a Christian, do you ever get homesick, you just want to be with the Lord? Do you want to be away from the filth and the corruption and the pollution and the darkness and sinful conversations, sinful speech that we listen to, sinful images that we have to endure, sinful lifestyles that grieve the heart of God and we just long for heaven? This is what should motivate us—a fear of the Lord.

A couple of subjects are very rarely spoken about today: 1) is the holiness of God, and 2) living in the fear of the Lord. Do you know the Bible says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” You lose the fear of God, you won’t live a holy life, you can fall into sin, you can hurt God’s heart, you can grieve God’s heart. Don’t lose your fear of God. You say, “Well, Pastor John, what do you mean by the fear of God?” It means that you love God so much that you don’t want to do anything by your thoughts, your words, or your actions to grieve His sensitive heart.

When I was younger and growing up, I had parents that were believers and they loved me. I’m so blessed to have the parents I had, but I did some things that grieved them. It broke their hearts. It wasn’t until I became a Christian that it was sad to me that I broke my mother’s heart or I broke my father’s heart because I did love them and I wanted to honor them and bring them joy. The same thing is true of our relationship to God our Father in heaven. I want to bring pleasure to God. I want to have the approval of God. I want the smile of God. I want the applause of God. There’s nothing more important for you than to have a consuming passion to want to please God in how you treat your wife, in how you treat your husband, in how you discipline and train your children, in how you live your life toward other people, in how you serve the Lord, in how you live for the Lord. You should want to please God in all you do, and that includes your thought life, your words, and the meditation of your heart.

All of this is basically in the context of: you’re a believer, Jesus is coming again, God is holy, walk in the fear of God. Let’s pray together.