

Called to Live Differently

1 Peter 1:13-25

This week's reading links tightly with Drew's exposition of 1:1-12 from last week, seeking to apply the theological truths that were stated in v1-12. Last week Drew unpacked the key ideas of Chapter 1 helping us to see that God is to be praised for the new birth and the assurance of coming salvation we have through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. This week Peter follows on from this message of assurance and encouragement to praise God, with an encouragement to enact our salvation in the way we live. He lists four key commands, each based in the character and actions of God.

- As God's people many things can impact how we live. Which of the following most impact your ability to enact your faith in different contexts?
 - My beliefs
 - The actions I take
 - The people around me
 - The environment I am in
 - My emotional state
 - Social & Societal Pressure
 - Other?

Peter demonstrates both in the content of this passage, but also in the way each command is based on different aspects of the character of God and his salvific action in the world that our behaviour should be based on who we are in Christ.

- Before moving forward, reflect on or discuss your understanding of who you are in Christ. Where are there areas you are unsure of? What are you most certain of? How might this impact how you live?

1. Live Hope (v13)

Peter begins this passage encourage people to set their focus on the hope they have. This verse forms a pivot from v3-12 into v14-25. In a way the following three actions also are a way we live out our hope as believers.

- Peter encourages them to have "minds that are alert" and "sober" as they set their hope on Jesus. The first phrase indicates 'girding the loins of your mind' or 'rolling up your sleeves' for action, the second is about clarity, and being able to think and act with a clear mind. How might this alertness, readiness and soberness of mind effect our ability to set our hope in Jesus?
- What do we notice that might stop us from being alert and clear minded? How might we address this?
- The basis for this hope is the salvation that has been expanded in v3-10. How do the previous verses form the basis for our need to set our eyes on Jesus coming?

2. Be Holy (v14-16)

The second call on believer's lives is to "be holy in all you do". Peter gives two basis for this:

- The first is in the transformation that has happened as we have become children of God. As children of God there should be a change in the way we live, no longer ruled by our sinful desires, but demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit. How have you seen this transformation in your own lives? How does Romans 12:1-2 add to our reflections?
- The second basis is in the character of God, "be holy as I am holy". This quote from Leviticus 11:44-45 or 19:2, as they are called to be the set apart people of God that he has brought out of Egypt. As God's children they are called to be like him. What might this mean for us today? How do we balance being God's set apart people, yet following Paul's example of engaging with our communities? (Acts 17:16-34)

3. Fear God (v17-21)

The third call from Peter is to “live out your time here as foreigners here in reverent fear”. When we speak today about fearing God it can often raise connotations of dread, anxiety and stress, but Peter is talking about an awe, respect and submission to God.

- What does it look like to fear God? How does it affect our everyday actions?
- The basis for this action is firstly centered around the image of God as Father and as judge. These two images of the intimate father and the judge both centre around the need for respect and obedience. How does that inform our ability of what it means to fear God?
- Following the call to fear God, Peter goes on to explain the way we were redeemed, bought back by the blood of Christ. He uses a similar image of redeeming a slave, by paying the price to purchase them back, but doesn't then refer to us as God's servants or slaves, instead we are referred to as Children. How does this add to our picture of what it means to fear God and our motivation to enact it?

4. Love one another (v22-25)

The final command is a very well known one, to “love each other deeply, from the heart”. Given all that God has done for us, our response should not only be directed at God but also at others.

- The first basis for the command to love one another is that we have been “purified by obeying the truth”. Our status before God individually, necessarily effects the way we engage with other believers! How does this mean we can approach our relationships with others? What might it mean for us to love based on our own relationship with God?
- The second basis is the enduring word of God. God is love, and as it began with his created word, his gospel word recreates us into relationship with him, enabled to love one another from his strength, and from his nature. How does this shape how we should seek to love one another?
- The call is to “love each other deeply”. The term deeply connotes ideas of effort, in both depth and duration. Peter expects there to be a level of effort put into loving one another. Howard Snyder suggests that:

“The church today is suffering a fellowship crisis... In a world of big, impersonal institutions, the church often looks like just another big, impersonal institution... One seldom finds within the institutionalised church today that winsome intimacy among people where masks are dropped, honesty prevails, and that sense of communication and community beyond the human bounds – where there is literally the fellowship *of* and *in* the Holy Spirit” (*The Problem of Wineskins*, 89-90)

- Discuss this quote together and what it might look like at GWAC to love one another deeply.

This passage clearly calls on us to live differently because of God's character and salvific action in the world. To do this we firstly need to understand who God is and the action he has taken in the world, and then to so deeply understand and obey it that we live from that basis in our lives.

1. Where might you need to grow in your understanding of God's character and action?
2. Where might you need to take time to draw near to God this week and let his character overflow in your lives?
3. How might you live from this basis, rather than anything else as you approach this week?

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another as you seek to live differently as God's called out people.