

Preparing for Christ's Return: A Call to Soberness and Holiness

Transforming Your Mind and Life Through God's Word

Well, last week, as you know, I did not get to finish my sermon on the revelation of Jesus Christ, so if you can turn with me to First Peter, and I'll be just touching on some points and then kind of sharing with what's been on my heart that God has shown me as I've been reading these passages that we'll go to tonight. So, we've been going through First Peter, and we're now in verse 13, and I finished off with, "wherefore gird up the loins of your mind and be sober," right? That word girding is so important because if we don't find ourselves being ready, everything else falls apart. Preparation to God is of utmost importance. He wants you, he wants us to be strong from the very beginning all the way to the end. He wants us to be ready from beginning all the way to the end, and everything, everything, the world, the flesh, and the devil, will try to stop that process, will try to stop you from meditating on the word of God.

Everything will stop you from doing that very thing that God says, this is how you start, you listen to the word of God, you think it over, what you're reading, and as you're thinking about it, your whole internal disposition changes, the way you believe things, the way you think about things, your attitude, he changes you from the inside out by his word. You see, it's amazing, we just have to think about his words and just meditate upon it, and then he takes care of the results. And as brothers and sisters in Christ, we know we've experienced that. You go, "How in the world did this change in my life, how in the world does this thought change from this thought, how did my attitude change from this attitude, this attitude, where it was all of it was selfish before, and all of a sudden was God-centered, Christ-centered?" That's what God wants to do with this word. He wants to transform you into a whole different person, to where this flesh of yours, the things of this world, the devil that tries to attack you, doesn't even affect you anymore. It doesn't even affect you anymore. Is that what you want, brother? Is that what you want, sister in Christ? Where no matter what the external circumstances come about upon you, that your internal clock is set to one person and one person only, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ and his return, because what he has done in your life, you know that nobody could have changed your life the way it is right now and will continue to be better and better and more sanctified in the Christ-likeness, into Christ-likeness. That's a wonderful thing to think about, isn't it? Isn't it worth spending time on? And when you do, the bottom line is your faith in the Lord, your hope in the Lord, your love for him will continue to grow. It will continue to grow. And Peter shares it like this, in

verse two, says, "Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." Multiplied, not added, multiplied. And if you know multiplication, there is an exponential growth in your life, if not a little small change here and there. It may feel like it, but God is changing the whole context of your whole life in a totally different trajectory in real time. And the real time, that's where we're going to go to, so stick with me into verse 13.

Therefore, as you remember, that word is a transitional verse. It's saying, everything before that I spoken about, think about these things, be ready for what, all these things that I've been telling you about, the results in the way you think, amazing. Gird up the loins of your mind. I gave the illustration of, in Eastern culture, people wore long robes, and they would have to put a belt on, because if you didn't, you can easily trip and fumble, and you won't even begin to be able to start on your course. And so, instead of that illustration physically, it's the idea to your mind. Bring together the truths of scripture, bring it all together, think about these things, wrap it around your mind, let these things be in the course of your mind, and let it renew your mind, Romans 12:2, because as you're doing it, God is going to do an amazing thing in your life, because he's not just concerned about small things. He is not a small God, amen? He is a big God, he is an awesome God, he is a God that does amazing things, because it's who he is. He's a good father. As you heard this morning, he doesn't want us to doubt his word. He wants to be, he wants us to be secured in his word. He wants us to experience his love that no amount of the things that you experience in this life can equate to, because it's, he's a source. He's a source to all kinds of love that you experienced. He's the source of it.

So, I started off in last week was the importance of thinking versus unthinking, or girding up your mind and ungirding up your mind, and I showed you in various ways how, if we stay passive, that's another way of saying loosening, you loosen up the things of God, and you go, ah, it's not that important, there's your problem. And then you start feeding your mind with all types of things, things that you shouldn't be reading, things that you shouldn't be watching on rerun over and over again. And I told you how the world makes it set up that way. He's a prince of power there. He's been doing this for a long time. He knows if he can get you at your mind, he's won the war. He's won the war. So, just look around you, how easy it is for your mind to be deceived, plenty of entertainment, plenty of things that you shouldn't be reading on the internet, such an easy way to get into it. Who do you think did that? Of course, God uses those purposes for good reasons, but what do you think devil's trying to do? Counterfeit, as our pastor said, he's going to always find ways to counterfeit what he wants you to truly experience in him. So, I gave some illustrations of how to tighten up your mind, and it begins with developing your own mind. God leaves it up to you. His grace is right here, it's available. You have your Bible, you have your Bible on your phone, many of you, you have the grace upon you, you have it all available. Keep those things in mind. It's a daily work, it is a daily work. And I gave the illustration of, you can't feed on yesterday's meal, right? You can't. God doesn't allow that to happen in our lives. He wants us to be sustained day unto day, week after week, year after year in his word.

Now, I want us to continue reading in this verse 13, girding up your minds, being sober, and then hope to the end, hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is where I want us to continue tonight. It's all on the preface of being sober, that you can hope to the end, because I want you to think for a moment, when you are filled with the things of this world, what is your life going to be like? Your life is going to be just thinking about this life only, right? You see how the mind and the life works? So, he's saying, hope to the end, hope to the end for the grace. If we don't think about the end, we will only be concerned about the current, and so he puts this here for a reason. He wants us to think about, what is our end? What is the end purpose of girding up our mind? What's the end purpose of staying sober? Is it for just ourselves, is it for just our own benefit? Of course not, of course not. And that whole purpose of all this is to keep our eyes fixed on the second coming of Jesus Christ. You do everything to the instructions that he gives to us. So what, one benefit is, keeps you away from evil, it keeps you away from being idle, it keeps you from thinking about only the temporal. And I brought out the verse in 1 Corinthians 4:18, to not fixate on the things that are temporal, but fix your things on eternal things. Is that your life right now, where you are thinking more about eternal things? Is that weighing on your heart more? It's a good test, isn't it? Because when it comes down to it, what's more stronger pull, the temporal, what you see, or the things that you don't see, which are the eternal things, which that's what God wants you to think about and pay attention to, because why? Think about it, if you're just thinking about primarily eternal things, eternal truths, what God is going to do in your life, how in the world can the things of the external affect your compass, your internal compass fixed on the Lord? It can't.

And that's what God is saying, this is how God sets it up for us to think, to hope to the end. Now, if you are born again, you've experienced the first coming of Christ, haven't you? And you thought the impacts of it, by your sins being away with, taken away by the Lord Jesus Christ, his payment on the cross, and we brought that out in the sufferings of Christ, didn't we? He suffered for us in our place. And so, we experienced that, so hope to the end. So, that's the impact of the first coming, and we have an impact on the second coming. Which ones is it that we are to set our hopes on? Both are equally important, right? What, the grace we have received now in Christ, revealed in the first coming in our hearts, and then receiving grace revealed in his glory. So, grace and glory comes together, grace in his first coming, glory in his second coming, as equal weight. So, as we are on this time period, where we have experienced the first coming, we're awaiting his second coming, we're in this period of waiting, and he says, "This is what I want you to wait upon is on the revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul brings this out in 1 Corinthians 1:7, waiting for the second coming. 2 Thessalonians 1:7, Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven. So, this is not just Peter talking, this is Paul talking about these things. And then, 2 Corinthians 4:6, this paraphrase, for God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, this is a reference to Genesis 1:3, has shined in our hearts to get the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So, what does that all mean? It means that our hearts have been enlightened to the truths of who Christ is, and who we will be when he comes back. And in light of this, we're all going to be made in his image, face to face in his glory. So, anticipating that revelation of his coming should give us a heart of readiness. We shouldn't think of that

as a small thing. That's a tremendous thing, isn't it? That's a glorious thing to wait upon, that one day we're going to see him face to face, we're going to be in his likeness, in his glory. That should do us, that should have a heart check on us. Are we thinking like that right now? Are we thinking about that of that future glory that we're going to experience one day? Look at Revelation 19:7, every eye shall see him. Compare that to Matthew 24:27, lightning from the east even all the way to the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Everyone's going to see him, one day. But this is in the context of we, as believers, we're safe, but those that are unbelievers, it's not, it's too late then. So, there's this anticipation, yes, we're waiting for the Lord to come, but we want to also have other people ready with us, and God is wanting to use this time to do that. So, we think, it's just, it's an interesting thing. We're waiting for the Lord to come, but God is keeping us here to use us to help other people to be ready for his coming. Are you in that dynamic tonight, or are you just thinking about yourself? Because God doesn't want that to be you. He doesn't want you to be thinking that way.

So, look at the contrast now in these different phrases. Look at verse 13, and then we're going to look at 14, but look at these contrasting phrases, first, between gird up the loins of your mind, in contrast to not fashioning yourselves, so one is putting on the belt, as it were, and one is, I don't want to put that belt on. Look at the other contrast, be sober, with the contrast to living according to your former lusts, so you're no longer, you're sober in thinking about, I want to think about God's perspective, not my own perspective, that's the former lust, you were just thinking about yourself. And then I'll look at the third differences, hope to the end, in contrast with being in your ignorance. Brethren, you are no longer ignorant. God has implanted to you the truth of the word of God in you. He has made it real in your life. You should think about those contrasts. These are big things, as I mentioned. God's doing an amazingly big thing in your life, and these are the transformations that are happening. Have you seen them, given the glory, given the praise of him doing this work, because he's doing it, because the Christian life, it is positive in its aim, in what, in the way you think, and in the way you behave. He's concerned about how you think, he's concerned about how you act, and all of it is to align you of your thoughts with his thoughts, with his actions, with your actions with his actions. That's how God's will is brought about in your life. He changes your will, he changes your will, and is cultivated through hope, through joy, through faith, and trusting in God's promises, that's his word. So, it's not some spiritual, I'm sorry, it's not some superficial positive thinking, it's not. There's a contrast. The way the world explains positive thinking is self-centered. Notice all the positive thinking stuff out there, it's all about you doing something, that's not what here, what God is doing, because positivity, according to scripture, is trusting in the Lord, and what he's going to reveal through your life, upon what, thinking on his word, not on the world's thoughts, his plan, not according to your plan. He changes you from the inside out.

So, these are all the things that he's transforming with, and then, verse 14, follow along with me, as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. So, this is obedience versus disobedience. We know this, as parents, that you only tell your son, your daughter, what to do, primarily, that's your role, right? Your responsibility is to take care of your own kids, your own children. And in many

ways, the way he has programmed, in a way, parents is a small picture of how we are in a relationship with God the Father. He's going to make us obedient. He will make us obedient. We're no longer children of disobedience, right? He's given us the ability to be obedient to him. He helps us to submit to Christ, and enter into disobedience, who is the obedient one, so that we can be obedient. He reveals it over and over and over again. And so, Peter tells us, this is who you are, you are an obedient child of God, and so, you're going to follow in his ways. That's what obedience is, are following after the life of Christ, and he's going to give you the ability to do so. And so, I think Peter remembers what our Lord Jesus Christ said in Luke 6:46, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do, and do not do the things that I say? What is that? Obedience. We are given the ability to obey what he says to us, amen. We no longer live in our former way of life with all of its lusts and all of its ignorance. Truth is just coming out of our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Is that your life, where it's just flowing from the Spirit of God, when you read the word of God, that you know deep inside, it's not coming from yourself, it's all coming from the Spirit of God? You see, there, in verse two, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, that's what he's given to you. And Paul says this in Ephesians 2:2, that the sons of disobedience live according to the what, course of the world, and by whose power, the prince of the power of the air. That's a good reminder. We're, we're not living according to the course of this world. We're on a different trajectory. We're not living according to the power of Satan, but in the power of his Spirit. And so, in Ephesians 5:6 and Colossians 3:6, we are no longer held by the wrath of God, because he says that, in Ephesians 5:6 and Colossians 3:6, the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, because they're disobeying what he's saying in his word, they don't believe it. We're not like that. We can believe, we can live out his word. That's a mark of a real believer. 1 Peter 1:2, Romans 5:19, essentially says this, that we're made obedient in righteousness, versus disobedience, which is caused by being a sinner. So, we're made to be righteous, we are made to do the things that God has said in his word. That's a contrast, isn't it? It's, it's always a black and white thing with God when it comes to the serious matters of our souls. He wants us to know, there's a big difference. It is not small to be a child of God.

So, let us expect this transformation in our lives. That's what readiness is, isn't it? Expectation. Wow, I wonder what God is going to do. That's to, that's to be in wonder. I, I want to, I want to know more, I want to experience more of his life, Christ's life in me, all for the purpose for his glory. Now, look at verse 15, verse 15, but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Where have we seen a similar phrase? A phrase, be, well, we saw it in verse eight, ye love. So, it's not like he has to force you to love him, you love. He doesn't say, you ought to love, you love. So, he says here, I'm holy, so you're going to be holy. It's just going to happen. He's going to continue to separate you more and more to do his will. And there is a process to that, and I'm going to talk about that. And let me just throw a little caveat out there, conversation means all manner of life. It doesn't mean just talking, communicating, it's indirect, it's your conduct, it's how you live your life. So, you can't fool people. You ever meet people at stores where there's something like, "I just want to get out of this work," but they're just putting a fake smile? That's not us as Christians. That's not us. What we say, our lives follow. That should be consistent in your life, and it will, because then

that's what God is doing in your life, to his glory. Because another way of putting it is, after the pattern, after the pattern of the holy one who called you. It's after a pattern, making us holy. Isaiah 57:15, that's where the word, the holy one, comes from. And this is God's requirement. It's a pretty high order, isn't it? Holiness, are you kidding me? I want to be holy. That's something to think about, isn't it? That's huge. That's not something you just gloss over. You think about it, and let it take effect. So, the distinct aim to holiness in your conversation, in your life, your conduct, because this is what Jesus said. Peter is referencing Jesus, Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Again, this is a high standard, a high requirement, but he's going to perform it. He's going to perform it. He takes care of your results. He wants you to think about it, and trust his promise, this is what's going to happen in your life. Don't let anything prevent you from thinking about these things, because you're losing out. See, left to ourselves, we're hopeless, right? Left to ourselves, we can't do these things. So, that's why I mentioned, it's a pattern, and it's the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look to him, he's transforming us, he's transforming us. Again, he wants us to cultivate this in our mind. He wants us to work it out in our mind, to be ready to expect his results.

So, I just want to touch on the holiness part. Many of us know it is cleanness, it is purity, yes, and yes, those are the qualities of holiness, because God is pure, there is no shadow of darkness in him. But it's also a state of mind, it is also a state of mind. Why, why is this so important? He wants us to experience this by seeing it played out. Again, remember, I talked about, God's not doing something where it's just, boom, you're not thinking about it, it just happens. As you're thinking about these things, you're going to start noticing these things in your mind. How did I have that pure thought? How did I have that clean awareness of things? Where'd that come from? There, you know, there, you know, there, you know, God is working in your life. Be ready, be ready, be ready, be ready in your mind, what he is doing. That did not come from your heart, that did not come from the world, certainly, that did not come from the devil. That came from a holy being, God himself. And he, and then, this idea of holiness, it changes the way you experience life with each other. He wants you to experience holiness with others, and that's why he puts it in a manner of conversation. You're not in your holy mountain, as it were, you are down here in the earth with real people, and you're experiencing holiness in your day-to-day. And that word, I didn't touch on it, but I want to bring it up, that grace being brought to you, it's not that you're waiting for the grace to come when Jesus comes, it's the idea that grace is being brought to you day unto day unto day unto day, and it's through his word, it's through the revelation of Jesus Christ. So, his word and his appearance, his word and his appearance, that's what's going on in your thinking, in your life.

Here's something very interesting thing I saw when I was studying this part of the text. You know what most marks a Christian from all other religions? It's this, think about this. Other religions say how you ought to respond to your enemies. See, when someone is really a devout Muslim or devout Jew, you don't deal nicely with your enemies. What's distinct is, we love our enemies. Where did that come from? Jesus, the Lord Jesus. That's a tremendous transformation, isn't it? That you can love someone that's

persecuting you, you can love someone that's ridiculing you, that's putting you under some sort of trial, because you want to glorify Christ. That's a heart change, that's a transformation that no other religion is experiencing. You see, now, Paul, transitioning now, Paul talks about hope, faith, and love, but did you know that Paul also talks about these three? Look at it, verse three, lively hope, verse five, kept by the power of God through faith, and then, verse eight, whom having not seen, ye love. All grace, all of grace, gifts. We heard about that this morning. These are all gifts that you get to experience. So, that's what you think about, these graces that are coming to you, and here's the result, the hope, faith, and love, the results are this, soberness, obedience, holiness, soberness, obedience, holiness. There's a connection, there's something that's happening when you have true faith, true hope, true love.

I'm going to end with verse 16, because it is written, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." Why does Peter bring it out twice? He already said something about holiness in verse 15, but yet he brings it up again in verse 16. Question may be asked, why is this all important? See, when it's anywhere in the scriptures, when you see, it is written, it's important to think about what that means, because he's referencing Leviticus 11:44. He's citing this verse. I don't have time to go over everything because of time, but the whole point of separating the foods, from cleanness to uncleanness, was this, was that everything that was unclean was an illustration of death, of corruption. So, it was already shown what the difference was, was that it was important to separate the two, because we didn't want it to have anything to do with corruption, we don't have anything to do with death. And that was a law that was written, and God didn't want to stamp anything on you, back in the Old Testament, of any appearance of death, any appearance of corruption. He wanted cleanness, he wanted life. And so, he put that, already was written, but now, he wants to do something to your heart. See, it wasn't explained that way in the Old Testament, but we know now in the New. And here it is, Mark 7:15-23, I won't touch on the whole thing, but just this, that uncleanness came from a sinful heart, cleanness came from a heart that's been cleaned, and who does that? Jesus, the Holy One. He accomplished it for us, once for all. Men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit, 2 Peter 1:21, words which the Holy Spirit teaches, 1 Corinthians 2:13, Isaiah 57:15, "Be made like him, so that we can dwell with him." All for the purposes of us having a clean heart, so that we can be with him, because he cannot have us mixed with sin. He must bring us to a place where we are just like him.

I want you to think about these things, because they're all very important for our growth and our spiritual walk and our growing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's all important for the lost to see that in us, as you're witnessing to your community that God has placed you in, you are to be this kind of a witness. Show them that being a Christian is not a small thing. He does amazing things, big things in your life. Make God big, make Christ magnified in your life, and see what God does, not only in your life, but in the lives of others around you. Yes, there will be persecution, yes, there will be difficulties, because the world, the flesh, and the devil will be attacking you 24/7, but don't be discouraged. Don't be discouraged, because we know Jesus is coming back, and we want everyone to be ready. You want everyone to be ready. God will produce the results, but let us be faithful. Let us be faithful to his word, let us be faithful to his calling, let us be faithful to

what he is doing in our lives, so that we can be the true witnesses of Christ. So, I urge you to think about these things, be ready to go about this week, don't dismiss these things, please, think more upon these things, and see the amazing transformation that happens in your life.

Let me pray. Father, thank you so much for this time in your word. God, you are amazing, who you are, God, that we get to know who you are, and not only know you, but we get to become like you, in your likeness, through our Lord Jesus Christ. God, help us to be more amazed by that truth, more and more, God, because everything in this world is trying us to stop thinking about these great truths, that have taken our brethren to parts of the world, where they know they're going, they're going to be persecuted, they know that their lives are going to be cut short, because they have found something of a truth, that no matter what external circumstances come their way, they're not, they're not shaken, they're not stirred up, because it's your word that transforms from the inside out, that where there, we can continue to glorify you, continue to speak your word, and to be used as lights and salt. Use us to this end, Father, in our community. And Father, those who are not believers, Lord, help them to think about these things as well. Help them to see that they need to be ready, but the only way they can be ready is to first trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, for his finished work on the cross, the suffering of our sin on the cross, and the wrath of God that he absorbed for us. He came for us, to bring us to you, Father, to be our mediator between God and man. Bless us in this way with salvations, Father. Bless us with greater desires to glorify you. Bless your word, may we live according to your will and to your purpose, and we'll thank you, in Jesus' name, amen.