

# BE HOLY

1 Peter 1:13-2:3

Key Verse: 1:15

**“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do...”**

In verses 1-12, Peter taught us about the living hope in the kingdom of God. God, in his great mercy, sent his one and only Son [Jesus Christ](#) to this world to save men from their hopelessness. The things of the world perish, spoil and fade away very soon. But men want to find hope in this world where there is no everlasting hope. Soon they despair. Soon they become the prey of Satan. But God gave us a living hope in the [kingdom of God](#) through his Son's death on the cross and resurrection. Today Peter tells us to live a holy life while on earth. The way to live a holy life is to work hard as stewards of God's world, living as pilgrims pressing forward to the kingdom of God.

**First, be self-controlled (13).** Look at verse 13. "Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed." To live a holy life, first of all, we must know how to live a self-controlled life. At the beginning of this verse, "be self-controlled" is a general statement, and the rest of the verse contains [examples](#) of how to live a self-controlled life. We were bought by the precious blood of Jesus and became members of the kingdom of God. Still, we are living in this world, where the power of Satan is dominant. Even though we have a new value system and a new view of man and the world through new birth, still, we have to live among many kinds of men. Some are short, some are tall; some are wicked and some are very sinful. The majority of people live according to situation ethics like Lot. To live a holy life in this world is the most difficult spiritual battle.

How can we live a holy life? First of all, we must know how to be self-controlled. What does "be self-controlled" mean? "Be self-controlled" does not just mean to suppress oneself from committing sin. "Be self-controlled" primarily means that we must control our way of thinking. Most importantly, "be self-controlled" means that we must make a decision of faith before doing something. Whatever we do, if we do it after making a decision of faith, it is self-control. There is an episode about St. Augustine. He was an intellectual hedonist. He enjoyed sophisticated ideas and delicate women. But once Augustine

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heard Shepherd Ambrose's message based on Romans 13:13,14. It says, "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

Augustine was converted by his message. Then he made a decision of faith not to enjoy intellectual hedonism any more. On the way from the church, he met one of his aristocratic mistresses. As soon as he saw her at a distance, he turned around and ran back to church like a 100-meter track runner. It was the first time for Augustine to run like that. He was very clear that he could not help immoral women with his intellect. So his running away was not irresponsibility, but it was acknowledgement of his inability. We must imitate St. Augustine in this. This is the beginning of a holy life.

**Second, set your hope on God's grace (13).** Let's read verse 13.

"Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed." How nice it would be if we could live a holy life without hindrance. But when we are going to live a holy life, the power of sin pulls us back into the gravity of sin. Therefore, we have to have a tug-of-war between the life of faith and the life of sin. If we are going to live a holy life we must fight with all our strength and defeat our opponent, the devil.

But our good fight or to run the race of faith is not enough (2Ti 4:7). So Peter reminds us how we were saved from the hand of Satan. Let's read verses 18-19. "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 forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." We were not saved from the hand of Satan with perishable things, such as silver and gold. We were not saved with our forefathers' traditions and examples. The Jewish forefathers wanted to raise their children with their tradition and their personal examples. They worked a little, but in the long run they taught their children how to wear black three-piece suits and how to grow their moustaches and beards. Human help has a great limitation.

We were saved by the precious blood of Christ. We are God's

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children who are bought by the precious blood of Christ. So we cannot betray our lives of faith so easily. We are saved through Jesus' death and resurrection, through which we have a living hope in the kingdom of God. So we should not give in to Satan's whispering since we were bought by the precious blood of Christ. We must know that God gave us his one and only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins.

God made Jesus a shepherd for the sick and needy. God made Jesus a Bible teacher to the ungodly. Finally, God nailed him on the cross to shed his blood so that with his holy blood he might wash away all our sinsick blood. God raised him from the dead on the third day and made Jesus our Savior and Shepherd through whom we might come back to the glorious kingdom of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ endured all the humiliation and suffering in order to obey the Father's world salvation purpose. Our Lord Jesus Christ took up all our transgressions in order to save us from our sins.

Matthew 1:21 says, "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." In this verse, "Jesus" means one who saves. Jesus saved us with his precious blood. How can we trade this precious grace with the things of the world, which would soon perish and fade away? How can we trade this precious grace for a fleeting pleasure? If we remember God's grace, we can back up our decision of faith to live a holy life. Therefore, we must set our hope fully on the grace to be given us when Jesus Christ is revealed.

**Third, do not conform to evil desires (14).** Look at verse 14. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. It is easy for us to enjoy our human thinking. It is very difficult for us to think spiritually. Romans 8:6 says, "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." We just enjoy human thinking, which leads us to death; it also leads us to the evil desires of the world. How can we avoid the human thinking, which leads us to death? We must be obedient to the word of God. And we must resist the evil desires which we had experienced in the past as a matter of life and death. If we do not resist these evil desires, the devil does not leave us alone.

There was a man who was handsome and able. He was proud of himself

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because of his outward appearance and others' compliments. In his arrogance, he decided to be his own man. But the devil did not leave him alone. The devil wanted to be friends with him. Wherever he went, the devil followed him and gave him trouble. So he became a trouble-maker. Finally, he came to live among the tombs. Still, the devil did not leave him alone. The devil tormented him day and night until he cut his flesh with stones and screamed because the torment of the devil was unbearable. This is the reason Peter said, "Do not conform to evil desires."

Look at verse 15. "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do..." This verse tells us that we should be holy because God is holy (16). These days there are many who understand the word "holy" with their common sense. They think the word "holy" means "set apart," or "different." In one sense that is true. But the holiness of God is the combination of God's righteousness and his redemption. When we long for the holiness of God, we experience immeasurable happiness in our souls. Mundane men think that happiness comes from money or from the mind. But happiness comes from one's soul. When Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus, she sang as follows: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Lk 1:46,47). Happiness comes from God and dwells in our souls. Happiness does not come from money and it does not dwell in our physical body. Therefore, physical man never experiences happiness.

When we control our evil desires and are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can bear much fruit. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, self-control, and so on (Gal 5:22,23). When we control our evil desires and are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can see spiritual things. There was a well-disciplined Roman centurion. When Jesus was crucified, he was there. When he surveyed the cross of Jesus, he saw God in Jesus and said, "Surely he was the Son of God!" (Mt 27:54).

Fourth, live as strangers (17). Look at verse 17. Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. After Jesus' ascension, Peter shepherded the flock of God in Judea. They were happy in Jesus. But suddenly Satan attacked them through Roman authorities and the hypocritical Jews. They were condemned and persecuted. Their property was all confiscated. Finally they had to run for their lives. They

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lost everything. Some even lost their children and had to live as strangers in strange countries. But Peter did not sympathize with them. Instead Peter encouraged them to live as strangers. Humanly speaking, it is hard to understand. At that time, strangers were known as wandering beggars. But the word strangers has a Biblical meaning. The Bible teaches us that this world is not a permanent place. We are all strangers. In other words, we are all holy pilgrims pressing forward to the kingdom of God. When Peter said, "live as strangers," he meant to live as holy pilgrims overcoming the situation of the world. If a holy pilgrim's life is like this, how can we rejoice to live a holy pilgrim's life? There is a good example of holy pilgrims. Our American forefathers were strangers to this land of North America. There were many pious Christians among them. They were strangers, but they did not beg around or try to be professional robbers. They lived before God. When they lived before God they could work hard from early morning, 4:30 a.m., to late night, 10:00 p.m. They removed huge rocks and got rid of small rocks and they pulled up shrubs and weeds. Thus they cleaned the land. They cut the trees and felled them. There is a saying, "I can't cut it." These days people interpret this saying, "I can't take it anymore." But originally it meant, "I tried to cut the tree but I couldn't cut it down. I'm sorry. I can't cut it." Our American forefathers worked so hard that they lived only 40 years on the average. What is more, they worshiped God. They taught their children the Bible, and showed them a good example of faith. Then God abundantly blessed this country. We cannot deny that our American forefathers were truly holy pilgrims with reverent fear. American forefathers had a fear of God. American forefathers loved God. American forefathers had a calling from God to establish America as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Of course, we do not deny there were some rustlers. When Peter said, "live your lives as strangers," it meant, "you should live as holy pilgrims in any situation and overcome the world and render glory to God." Sometimes our ideal and reality do not match. Likewise, God's sheep under Peter's care were new Christians. They had a living hope in the kingdom of God. But to live their lives as strangers in ancient times, when each village was like a foreign country, was not easy for them at all. So Peter taught them who God is and what mankind is in verses 20-25. Look at verses 20,21. "He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in

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God." Here Peter introduces God. God so loved mankind from the beginning, and before the creation, that he decided to send his one and only Son to save us from our sins. God sent his one and only Son to this world so that we might believe in God through Jesus. God crucified him and shed his blood to cleanse our sin-stained blood that we might have faith in God and hope in God. Fifth, love one another deeply (22). Look at verse 22. "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart." In this verse Peter tells us that we were haters of God and we hated each other. We were enemies of God and enemies of one another. So human life was hellish. But God showed his love through his Son Jesus Christ so that we may love God and we may love one another deeply. There is a man who never loved his wife. His wife was unloved and became a kind of mental patient. Because he does not know God he cannot love his wife. He does not love himself either. He lives only in trouble and distress and loneliness. Our God is love (1Jn 4:16). God planted his love in us through his Son Jesus Christ. So we can be happy by loving one another deeply. Peter awakens God's sheep under his care, who were scattered all around the world, to know who they are. Look at verse 23. "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God." This verse explains that we were not bought or saved with several dollars. God saved us by his word of promise. Peter says in verses 24,25: "For, All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.' And this is the word that was preached to you." Man is indeed like grass. But God, in his great mercy, gave us his eternal word. He gave us his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus served us until he died on the cross. But most remarkably, Jesus worked hard to plant the word of God in men's hearts. Therefore, we must also serve God's sheep through diligent one-to-one Bible study. At this time, we must make a decision of faith to live a holy life as holy pilgrims. As holy pilgrims we must rid ourselves of all malice (2:1-3). Instead, we must crave pure spiritual milk, that is, the word of God.