

Sermon

Grace Street Fellowship, Dr. Jim Burgin, pastor

Sunday, August 12th, 2018

Sermon Series: “Staying Cool in a Hot Summer”

Sermon #7 – **Transformed Living** – 1 Peter 1:13-16

1 Peter 1: 13-16: ¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: Be holy, because I am holy.”

Opening

1. When we speak of staying cool in a hot summer, I am not talking about perennial cultural hot buttons, or what some refer to as the “culture wars.” I don’t mind when someone says “Happy Holidays to me instead of Merry Christmas. I don’t typically join boycotts to attempt to punish a company until they come back to my position. I believe change happens from the inside out, spiritually and so on. Please understand, I am not undercutting the importance of these discussions, or anyone’s important perspective on any of these issues. I am just saying that this isn’t what I am talking about when I am referring to a hot summer.
2. What I am saying is that this time we’ve been given is a era in which increasing hostility to Christianity and to Christians is growing, and that we need to know 1) how to thrive in this culture, but also 2) how to impact the culture for the Kingdom;
3. Throughout history, the church has responded in various ways: 1) We’ve withdrawn. 2) We’ve attempted to conquer, and 3) We acquiesced to culture, and more.
4. What I believe the Lord has wanted us to hear through these last weeks is that we don’t need to withdraw or to fight, but to be people of peace, to work on our heart and character, to watch our words, to turn the other cheek, etc. You can find these admonitions on our website: avenueofgrace.com.
5. Today, I want us to hear 4 instructions for our times from the Apostle Peter writing to believers who were living in an anti-Christian society. The question raised for these believers is the same that we should pose for ourselves today. How can we have the power of soul in times of great stress and anxiety not just to endure the evil day, but to thrive in it.

Introduction

1. Peter wrote to Christians enduring the threat of persecution;
2. They are in the midst of various trials (1:6);
3. They are falsely accused as evil-doers (3:16);
4. And on it goes;
5. On July 19th, 64 AD, a great fire broke out in Rome. If you’ve heard the statement, “Rome wasn’t built in a day,” it refers back to this fire which devastated the city. The fire burned for 3 days and 3 nights, was stopped, and then redoubled. The Emperor was blamed, because he had a passion for building, and they believed he had burned Rome, so that he could rebuild it.

6. Whether that's true, no one knows, but we do know that he watched the raging fire from a safe distance and expressed how charmed he was by the flower of the flames.
7. In order to deflect the rage coming at him, he scapegoats the Christians, and begins to persecute them in the most horrific, unspeakable ways. One historian says a "huge multitude of Christians" perished.
8. In the end, it was declared unlawful to be a Christian.
9. 1 Peter was written to strengthen men and women in jeopardy of losing their lives.
10. Here are four sets of instructions Peter gives the people which we may need to heed:

Prepare your minds for Action

The bridge at Moulton Falls is a scenic, forested park in Washington state about 40 miles north of Portland, Ore. The bridge is 60 feet above the water. Large rocks jut out along the river's shore, and a sign says that diving from the bridge is prohibited. Unfortunately, this doesn't keep many thrill-seeking teenagers from leaping into the cool river on a hot summer day.

On Tuesday afternoon, August 9th (last Tuesday), 6 year-old Jordan Holgerson and friends prepared to do just that. In her swimsuit, Jordan stood on the outer ledge of the bridge. One member of the group starts filming. Someone begins a countdown, and Jordan says "No, I won't go in." She's saying no, a young man says next to her. She is facing the river, but not in a position to dive or jump properly when someone from behind pushes her in with considerable force. She falls through the air, arms flailing, the equivalent of three stores for about 3 seconds before she hits the water below in a violent belly flop.

She suffered five broken ribs, and injured trachea, a bruised esophagus and air trapped in the lining of her lungs. She is going to recover in time, but medical authorities say she is fortunate not to be paralyzed.¹

1. Peter is saying that we are to be mentally prepared or positioned to face the difficult circumstances which happen when believers live in a culture which opposes or antagonizes them;
2. If you have another translation than the NIV, it says that we are to "gird up the loins" of our mind. This is a clothing reference relevant to the day. When men were ready to run, they had to lift the long robes they wore by tying them around their waist, so that they could move quickly.
3. What are some important ways we can prepare our mind in these days:
 - a. Watch what you put into your mind. My youth minister used to say "Garbage in/Garbage Out. When you eat food that is spoiled or poisoned, it makes your body sick. When you allow ideas or images into your mind which are inconsistent with your faith, it leaves you unprepared spiritually for any battle.
 - b. Study God's Word – Don't just read it, but understand it. God's truth becomes a sword for the battle at hand.
 - c. Think Through Suffering before it happens to you – so that your faith will remain steady in the midst of the heartache.
 - d. Anticipate the attack of the enemy & be ready to respond
 - e. Your faith must be yours & not someone else's

¹ Samantha Schmidt. [The Washington Post](#). "'I won't go in:' Frightening video captures teenage girl shoved off bridge, plunging 60 feet into river below. August 10, 2018. Accessed August 11, 2018.

Be Self-Controlled

1. Another way of saying this is to be sober, or disciplined. Stay steady at the task of faith, but you do this by keeping your eyes on the goal.
2. Being a follower of Jesus without discipline is like trying to run in the marathon without ever practicing;
3. But having discipline without being a disciple is like always practicing for the marathon, but never participating.
4. Pastor & theologian Jim Denison points out something important. He says we need to remember that discipline in the spiritual life is not the same thing as discipline in sports. Discipline in sports is the concentrated effort to master the body so that it can obey the mind better. Discipline in the spiritual life is the concentrated effort to create the space and time where God can become our master and where we can respond freely to God's guidance.
5. Thus discipline is the "creation of boundaries that keep time and space open for God.
6. Said simply: "When we work, God works." When we make time for God, we position ourselves to receive what his grace intends to provide. We cannot earn what he can only give. But we must be close enough to receive what he wants to bestow. ²

Set your Hope

After the wedding, and during the wedding photos in Orange Beach, Alabama, someone came up to the couple in crisis saying someone was drowning. The groom, Zac Edwards, was a former lifeguard and a coast guardsman, so his new bride told him to go. Two other teenagers were heading out to save the child, and Edwards waved them off, but accepted the board they had with them. He reached the drowning swimmer and started heading back, but the undertow was too difficult, and he began to get weak. He thought he might have to let the teenager go. What kept him going, however, was thinking about his new bride, and his family. It was the hope which gave him the strength to continue.³

When the trials come, because we are faithful, we set our hope on the grace given to us when Christ is revealed.

1. We are given a "living hope." 1:3 Means our Lord is living, not dead, but it also means that his hope lives inside of us. We have an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for us.
2. We are shielded by God's power, even though we suffer. You know God saved you. You know, by God's mercy and grace, that you will live with him in heaven. But what about the in between times? What about the pressures, stresses, weariness, persecution, frustrations, suffering, confusion, perplexity, fears, and traps that we face now? Does God do anything about that? Yes, he protects us. He brings joy & peace in the pain, and even if we die, our salvation is secure.
3. We don't need protection from death – we go straight to heaven; We need protection in suffering, so that it shapes us to be better and not bitter. We need protection from the evil one, and from overwhelming temptations and lusts that devour the soul.

² James C. Denison. Denison Forum. "What 'Living Biblically' says about religion and culture today." Posted February 28, 2018. Accessed August 11th, 2018.

³ Toi Thornton. FOX 10, "Groom saves drowning man during wedding pictures. Posted August 6th, 2018. Accessed August 11th, 2018.

4. This power from God sustains our faith in the battle.
5. This isn't optimism. Esteemed pastor John Piper wants us to think of it like this: "Our children are coming into a world that is flaunting evil more openly than we have been accustomed to. Our children will have to deal with manifestations of sinfulness that were more restrained in past decades in this country. So, we don't want to raise them as flimsy optimists, whose hopes sink with each new outrage, but as ultimate, unshakeable optimists, whose hope is full and strong, because of the grace that is coming to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ, not to mention that grace that is given in each new day."⁴

Live Holy Lives

1. The holiness of God is one way of talking about God's otherness.
2. Hannah says in 1 Samuel 2:2, "There is no one holy like the Lord, indeed, there is no one besides thee, nor is there any rock like our God; His holiness is transcendent, pure, absolute uniqueness.
3. Isaiah saw the Lord and heard the angels singing "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord almighty, and he fell on his face, aware of the infinite difference between himself and God. He cried out that he was a man of unclean lips.
4. It isn't enough to say that we have the righteousness of Christ in us, so that our holiness comes from him. That is true to an extent, but we are to be holy in all we do.
5. We are not to conform to the evil desires like we did before we became a Christian, but we are to be conformed into his image – to be holy, because he is holy.
6. Charles Spurgeon reminds us that there are 4 kinds of people who try to get on without holiness:
 - a. The Pharisee – keeping the letter of the law, but missing the Spirit. They clean the outside of the cup, but not the inmost part;
 - b. The Moralist – hasn't done anything wrong in his life, he thinks. He treats his neighbor with respect, and he things on balance that he's done more good than harm. His spirit is sweet overall, and he is generally well-liked. This man isn't holy. Holiness does exclude morality, but morality isn't holiness. Morality skims the surface, but holiness cuts deep.
7. You are struggling with holiness, says Spurgeon, if the following conditions are true:
 - a. You can look forward to any future indulgence in sin with a degree of delight;
 - b. If you aren't consistent – an angel in public and devilish at home.
 - c. If we can look with delight upon the sins of others.
8. Here we must fall on the mercy of God, and ask Him to keep shaping us into His image.
9. Moving towards holiness has two sides:
 - a. Passive – soaking in the sweet love of our savior. Sitting at his feet.
 - b. Active – Choosing to put aside that which is unholy and making Godly choices.
10. This holiness doesn't protect us from suffering or persecution, but it does help people see Jesus in us when we are pressed.

⁴ John Piper. "Live in Hope, Live in Holiness, Live in Holy Fear: Children Desiring God 2013 National Convergence. Minneaolis, MN. Scripture 1 Peter 1:13-21. Read the article here: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/live-in-hope-live-in-holiness-live-in-holy-fear>. Accessed 8-11-18.

11. Finally, Holiness isn't passive per se. Our faith is very active. Here Peter says that we are to be holy in all we do. We stay on the move, loving people in Jesus name, fulfilling the Great commission, but we do it in Him and unto Him all the way.

Conclusion

Invitation