

Martin Luther once said,

**“I have two dates in my diary: this day, and that day, the day of Jesus return, and I seek to live this day, in the light of that day.”**

V 13 of chapter 1 of 1 Peter:

***Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.***

Do you find it hard to live **this day** in the light of **that day**? There here are six words to encourage us to sum up the message today: **the best is yet to come.**

That's the power of v 13. If you are listening today and know the grace that has come to you in the Lord Jesus Christ this verse tells us there's more to come. The best is yet to come.

I want to speak about this transformation in three ways to help us understand the message that Peter blesses us with **this day**.

I want to speak about **grace in Christ's return**. Vv 13-17 of chapter 1. **Grace in Christ's redemption**. Vv 18-21 that follow. And **grace in Christ's rebirth**. V 19 through to v 3 of chapter 2.

Return. Redemption. Rebirth. Three certainties that help us live **this day** in the light of **that day**.

### **Christ's Return (1:13-17)**

The message of Christ's return in the Scriptures can be summed up in two words: **be ready**.

Do you feel ready? There could not be a more important question for you.

Peter says in verse 13. Set your hope on Christ's return. Most translations say **fully. Completely**. With minds that are alert and sober.

Be ready for action. Prepared. How? Vv 14 & 15 explain:

***14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."***

As obedient children **watch your conduct**. A word Peter will use three times in this passage.

Your conduct should be holy. V 15. Your conduct is to be a right fear of God. V 17. In v 18 the readers are redeemed from the empty way of life of their ancestors. The empty **conduct of their fathers**, says Peter.

Your conduct is to be holy. Leviticus 19:2 is the closest reference to v 15, though it's not the only time in Leviticus this call is emphasised.

When our culture thinks of holiness it usually reverses the meaning of this passage. Holiness becomes a title given to religious leaders. We draw haloes around their head and place them on pedestals. Often suggesting they're so holy they don't need God.

Peter's emphasis is that **holiness is a gift given to all who are the children of God**. V 2. Chosen according to the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

Holiness is the Spirit's work in your life. It's why you can be like God in your conduct. It's his work in your life.

Jesus said in John 15 that after he returned to heaven following his death and resurrection he would send the gift of his Holy Spirit. **To guide you into all the truth**.

A truth that **purifies**, v 22. The truth that **endures**, v 25. The truth that enables us to **grow up in your salvation**. V 2 of chapter 2.

**But to be like God is not to be God**. Note that he is the Father **who judges everyone impartially** and we are to **have a right fear of him**.

Never underestimate who you are dealing with. If you watch Jesus's earthly life you see how, even though actually being equal with God, he lived his life in faithful and reverent obedience.

To be like God is not to be as God. Holiness is best expressed in humility. Humility leads to a right fear of God.

It saves from being without fear. As if we cared not about God. And lived life in risk-laden ignorance of him.

Or fearful. As if we did not understand that being right with him through Christ has removed our guilt and shame before him.

**According to this chapter, holiness is the gift God gives you by his Spirit so that you can be confident you are ready for Christ's return, no matter what the timing.**

18<sup>th</sup> century Preacher and Pastor John Wesley was once asked the question by an enquirer, **"How do you intend to spend your day?"**

Wesley replied, **"In the morning I plan to prepare my sermon. In the afternoon I plan to visit a widow in my congregation."**

**"And if you knew the Lord Jesus was returning tonight, what would you then do?"**

Wesley responded, **"In the morning I would prepare my sermon. In the afternoon I would visit that widow in my congregation."**

We are not meant to be John Wesleys. But we are meant to be ready.

I am surprised by how readily the demands of the day replace the chance to delight of God's Word.

Psalm 1 tells me

***<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. <sup>3</sup> That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.***

**There is nothing more sound and certain that a life lived in the power of the Spirit through obedience to the truth of his word.**

**Nothing could make you more ready for his return.**

## Christ's Redemption (1:18-21)

The best is yet to come. Because, secondly, **the best has already been done.**

Peter links Christ's return with Christ's redemption.

Last week during one of our feeds one of our members sent in this question.

**'What exactly is our inheritance?'**

My answer I didn't place enough emphasis on Peter's key concern. In v 4. V 7. V 18. And again in v 23.

**The imperishable.** That's your inheritance. The best is yet to come.

Every time you read the Expiry date on the milk you've bought. Every time you sight the Used Car yard. Every time the new season's fashions go on display. Every time you drive by the Funeral Home. **You are reminded the best is yet to come.**

**Because the best is already done.** V 18:

***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 ancestors, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.***

**The imperishable work of the cross. The lamb slain. Now enthroned in heaven.**

In life, we're all inheritors. And we all pass something on to others. In v 18 these readers are redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to them from their ancestors. Literally, Peter says, the vain conduct of your forefathers.

The Old Testament is testimony to the disobedience of the people of God that become generational. Their emptying of the power of the promises of God.

An empty life. I don't think anyone of us wants to be saddled with that assessment. What's more, to pass it on to the next generation.

And to recognise today that many of us deeply despair of life. Often not by our own doing. Hope has eluded us. If you are in a vulnerable place **please seek help**. We have listed on our website some resources you could access to seek support. Or get on touch with a friend. Or with us.

The writer of Ecclesiastes takes the opportunity to taste all the blessings of this fleeting earthly life. He is prepared to acknowledge they are a gift from God to be enjoyed.

**But he cannot avoid the conclusion that if the things of this world, the perishable, are the sum total of your hope, they are just vanity.**

V 20 of 1 Peter says Christ's death and resurrection has changed everything:

***He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.***

He was revealed, v 21, so that your faith and hope is in the God, who invites you to share the imperishable with him. **The best is yet to come.**

### **Christ's Rebirth (1:22-3:2)**

Grace in Christ's return. Grace in Christ's redemption. **Grace in Christ's rebirth.**

V 23 says those who have come under the truth of the word have been born again. John 3 tells us this is the work of the Spirit.

This is the picture of the life that is ready for the return of Christ. V 22. The church is thriving. Love for each other that is sincere and lasting.

***Rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind.***

V 1 of chapter 2 is written in case we weren't aware what insincere love looks like. Of what brings down the church. Of what being ready for Christ's return **doesn't look like.**

Peter concludes with **another timeless truth**. We could call it **an imperishable contrast**. From the words of the prophet Isaiah, v 24:

***“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord endures forever.”***

***And this is the word that was preached to you.***

The quote from Isaiah teaches me at least two things.

**My tendency to think more highly of myself than I ought. And to give too much time to the things of this world than they deserve.**

Grass withers. Flowers fall. An imperishable contrast with the pure spiritual milk of God's word we are to desire in v 2 of chapter 2.

**With one imperishable goal in mind. Peter literally writes: to grow into our salvation.**

**Keep becoming the people God has made you. Look more and more ready for Christ's return through obedient and humble lives of holiness and eternal hope. The Spirit at work within you.**

Theologian and author Jim Packer died in July this year. At 93. He once wrote:

**“Budget and plan for an ordinary span of years, but in spirit be packed up and ready to leave at any time.”**

Are you packed and ready? **The best is yet to come.**