

1 Peter 1:13-16 | “Hope & Holiness”

I. Howard Marshall spoke about his home near Scotland as he said, “Snowstorms and violent weather mark the winters of the Cairngorm Mountains.

Almost every year some unfortunate climbers who venture out on them at that season come to grief, not because they are inexperienced climbers, but because they set out ill prepared for the weather.

Every year warnings are given that the mountains are treacherous in the winter.

While they are safe for fully equipped and experienced climbers, they can be fatal for the ill-equipped.” [pauseeee]

Are you equipped or ill-equipped to live the Christian life?

When the storms, treacherous conditions, and hardships of life hit you, are you equipped or ill-equipped to handle them?

When they arrive, what’s your mind focused on? Where’s your hope? How do you live? [pause]

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter 1:13-16, as we will see how Peter tries to help us to become equipped to live as God’s children. [pause]

Before you take any trip, you need to be prepared.

And the Christian life is no exception, for it is a journey of sojourning in this world.

So let’s READ OUR PASSAGE and see what God says to us through Peter’s letter. [pause]

In our passage, Peter emphasizes two subjects: hope and holiness.

*And he commands us to fight for these things, and so the first point that I want to bring out is, we are to...*

**I. Fight the fight of hope**

Peter shows us that the fight of hope is a *fight*.

And the reason for it being a fight is because it doesn’t come easily or naturally.

The default direction of our hearts is to become hopeless when our circumstances turn sour.

And so it takes effort and intentionality to move away from that inclination, and to put our hope in something certain. [pause]

For each of the two main points this morning, I want to unpack our motivation, our goal, and our weapon needed to fight these battles.

*So what's our motivation for fighting the fight of hope?*

### **A. Our motivation: grace**

For the first 12 verses of his epistle, Peter exulted in our salvation and the salvation blessings that come from God.

*According to his great mercy, the Lord has caused us to be born again to a living hope.*

We have an inheritance awaiting us in heaven, and a future salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

*The prophets desired to know the details of this salvation, and the angels long to look into these things.*

This is our great salvation, planned by God and accomplished by Christ. *[pause]*

*For 12 verses, Peter didn't use one imperative, but only proclaimed the good news of grace that has come to us.*

But now, on the 13th verse of his letter, he changes his tone.

*He goes from the declaratives of the gospel to the imperatives.*

That's why he says, "Therefore..."

*So what follows is a logical conclusion of what preceded.*

What follows can *only* happen because of what came before. *[pause]*

*So because of our great salvation, and our great status as Christians, then we should think and act differently. [pauseeee]*

Our motivation to have hope is because of grace.

*God has saved us, but not only that, he has promised us a great future.*

So based on that, how could we *not* have hope? *[pause]*

*Peter has just recounted our amazing and certain living hope, inheritance, and future salvation, so now he says, "therefore...hope completely in the grace to come." [pause]*

Since he showed amazing grace to us in the past, then we can hope in his amazing grace to come.

*And that brings us to our goal...*

### **B. Our goal: hope completely in the grace to come**

This is our goal as we fight the fight of hope. *[pause]*

Isn't it interesting that this is a command of God?

I feel like most often we don't see hoping in God as a command, but it is!

And since this is a command, then what does that mean when we aren't setting our hope fully on the grace to come?

We are going against a command of Scripture, which is a big deal.

When you are hopeless, you are disobeying God.

When you put your hope in something other than God, you are disobeying God.

When you don't put your hope *completely* in the Lord, you are disobeying. *[pause]*

Many times we don't view our hopelessness as sin.

We just think, "I'm just discouraged, that's all."

But no, God is telling us, "You're not trusting me. You're not trusting my promises for you."  
*[pause]*

Often people don't realize this, but God's commands are for our good.

He wants us to experience the joy, contentment, and stability that setting our hope on the coming grace brings.

He wants the best for his children!

Yet we often feel like his commands are depriving us of something, and while they may be depriving us of something...

...They are simply depriving us of a lesser thing, so as to give us something far greater. *[pauseeee]*

Christian, set your hope on the grace to come.

Put your hope there! *[pause]*

Setting your hope on the grace to come means that I'm trusting God with the future.

I have heard his promises to me, and now I must believe his word and hope in them. *[pause]*

The fact that this is a command demonstrates that this doesn't come easy, but it must be a conscious effort on our part. *[pauseeee]*

Did you notice what word was included in this command?

Not just 'set your hope on', but 'set your hope *fully* on.'

He wants our hope to be *completely* on the grace to come.

This means that our hope can't be in something else.

Our hope can't be partly on the grace to come and partly on something else, but fully on the grace to come. *[pause]*

Where is your hope fixed?

Is your hope somewhere else? Is your hope divided?

Where's your hope? *[pauseeee]*

A time like we are living in is actually forcing the object or objects of our hope to the surface.

That's what trials and hardships do, they make your hopes bubble up to the top, so that they are clear and plain. *[pause]*

So really examine your life, where do you set your hope?

On what happens politically? On what happens in our nation?

Is your hope in your ability to be successful in your career?

Is it in money? Is it in your hobbies? Is it in your health? Is it in a person other than Christ?  
*[pause]*

Here's a good diagnostic question to reveal where you put your hope - what is it that if this thing was taken away, you would lose all hope?

If it was taken away, you would think, "All hope is lost."

But is our hope supposed to be in these things? No way!

I want to put my hope in something that cannot be shaken or taken by any changing circumstance.

I want to put my hope in something so certain and dependable that even if I lose my money, my job, my house, my family, my reputation, or my nation - I still have it!

And what is your hope *supposed* to be in? "On the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." *[pause]*

As Christians, we have received great grace at the moment of salvation, but Scripture teaches us that there is still MORE grace coming to us!

Isn't that amazing?!

Think of the amount of grace we have already received, and yet God says, “You know what, I’m going to give you even more than that!”

And get this: the grace we received doesn’t compare to the grace to come at Christ’s second coming. *[pause]*

Grace is on the way!

When Christ returns, we will receive the full blessings and riches of finally being with God.

This sin-cursed world will become a new heaven and a new earth.

These sin-cursed bodies will become new, resurrected bodies, not open to decay.

Our faith will turn to sight, and we will have the rewards of Heaven.

We will receive an inheritance in heaven, with all its perfection and this will bring us immeasurable joy.

We will have the privilege of seeing our Lord and being with him forever.

The list could go on and on.

Perfect, sinless bodies in a perfect, sinless new heaven and new earth, enjoying our perfect God and Savior.

There is unfathomable grace coming to you, Christian! *[pauseeee]*

Were you amazed by the grace at salvation?

You should rightly be amazed by it, but just wait until Christ comes again.

When he comes, he will *bring* grace to you.

It’s all because of Christ! He secured it, and he brings it. *[pauseeeeeeee]*

My eyesight is bad, as I am near-sighted, and everything that is farther than a couple feet away is extremely blurry.

And so I need contacts to aid me in seeing far. *[pause]*

That’s like us when it comes to our perspective...

We are all inherently near-sighted, and that’s why our default is to ignore the long-term promises of God and put our hopes in our short-term circumstances.

So what we need are contacts for our faith.

And what is it that is to be our contacts for our faith? God’s Word. *[pause]*

God's Word is read and placed over our eyes to allow us to look into the distance and have a long-term view.

And now with God's Word as our contacts, we can certainly see near, but we can also see far.

And when we look far, we see that the grace to come is where our hope needs to be, so we set our hope there. *[pauseeee]*

Is your hope set fully on the grace to come? Or is it set on something else? Is your hope divided?

Fight the fight of hope! *[pauseeee]*

*Not only does God tell us our mission, but he tells us what weapon to use to fight for hope. And it is...*

### C. Our weapon: our mind

Look there at verse 13, as we see this come out.

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope...”

Those two phrases show us the ways that we set our hope on the grace to come. *[pauseeee]*

Most translations translate the first phrase, “preparing your minds for action” or something similar, but the actual phrase used here is “gird up the loins of your mind.”

Now to us as modern readers, that phrase goes right over our heads, as we don't use that kind of language, so that's why the translations use a modern equivalent here.

But it's important to understand what Peter is saying.

In the 1st century, men wore long robe-like clothing, and so if they needed to work hard or run somewhere, they had to gather up the bottom of their robe and tuck it into their belt.

This is what it meant to ‘gird up the loins.’

And Peter says that we should gird up the loins *of our mind*. *[pause]*

So putting all of this together, what exactly does he mean?

He means, prepare your mind for action!

Prepare to think hard!

Roll up your sleeves and get ready to think!

Put yourself in a ready state to do some strenuous thinking! *[pause]*

This is an active, not a passive activity.

Meaning, the default state of our mind is to not be ready to do some thinking about where we place our hope.

Naturally, we don't get our mind ready to think hard about our hope.

But our minds *must be* prepared and ready to think.

If not, your mind will wander and go all over the place. *[pause]*

**We need minds prepared and ready to do some strenuous thinking about truth!**

Even right now, is your mind engaged? Is it thinking through these things or is in a laid back mode?

It's easy to shut your mind off, but it takes effort to get it in gear and start thinking hard. *[pause]*

Is your mind prepared to think and focus on truth?

What is your mind even focused on? The here and now or your future hope? *[pauseeee]*

Peter is saying, "Get your mind prepared for thinking, so that you can set your hope in the grace to come!" *[pauseeee]*

**Those 1st century men who didn't gird up the loins of their clothing would trip and fall on their face when they started running.**

And that's what happens when our minds aren't prepared to do some thinking on truth, we keep tripping and falling on our faces.

And we wonder, "Why can't I run the race of faith well? Why am I so discouraged and hopeless?"

Well did you gird up the loins of your mind so that you can think on truth so as to set your hope in the right place when trials come? *[pauseeee]*

So Peter says, prepare your mind for action, but also, he says be "sober-minded".

The way to understand this phrase is to think of the opposite of sober-minded.

**What's the opposite? Well what's the opposite of sober? Drunk or intoxicated.**

Being drunk or intoxicated makes you lose control of your faculties.

So to be sober-minded means to be in control of your thinking.

You are clear-headed, alert, and self-controlled in your mind. *[pause]*

You see, drunkenness distorts what is real and true, so being sober means I'm able to discern what is real and true.

Being sober-minded helps me be alert to dangers and lies.

*It helps me to evaluate things correctly, according to a biblical worldview. [pauseeee]*

So Peter is telling us to think clearly, be alert in your mind, stay on your toes spiritually. *[pause]*

*Being sober-minded helps us to not be swayed by emotions or crafty, deceptive arguments because we are thinking clearly and we're alert. [pauseeee]*

Our culture is so driven by emotions and they are good at creating crafty, deceptive arguments.

*So we cannot fall prey to these things!*

That's why our minds need to be engaged and alert! *[pause]*

*If my mind isn't alert and thinking clearly, then I could easily get caught up in these things and lose my hope, or put my hope in something else.*

But if my mind is alert, then I'm able to think through these things and continually keep pushing myself to set my hope on the grace to come. *[pauseeee]*

*How can you make sure you are sober-minded?*

Don't allow anything to hinder your spiritual alertness.

*The values, priorities, and things of this world can intoxicate our thinking.*

When you are so consumed with these things, how is your mind going to be spiritually alert?

*It's not, because you are under the influence of the world's mindset. [pause]*

Our career, reputation, possessions, and recreation can all dull our mind to spiritual things, if we let them.

*When we are so driven by these things, they overtake our faculties so that the things of God are blurred and neglected. [pauseeee]*

What is it that numbs your mind to the things of God?

*Are you allowing your feelings to control your thinking?*

Are the attractions of this world making your thoughts on spiritual matters unclear and distorted? *[pauseeee]*

*A ready and clear-thinking mind is what is needed to set your hope on the grace to come.*

You need to be constantly thinking about the truth of God's Word and the hope that you have.



Your mind needs to be alert and ready to do some thinking because the things of this world will try to gobble up your thoughts. *[pauseeee]*

Let's say you are going through your normal day.

With a mind not alert and ready to do some thinking, your emotions can overtake you and you start to feel discouraged and hopeless.

When that happens, get your mind going and start thinking clearly, look at God's Word, and what does it say? It says that you have grace coming to you!

**Set your hope there! *[pauseeee]***

Your mind should be constantly directed yourself to hope in God!

Kinda like, "Come on, Matt! I know this looks bad, but think clearly! Grace is on the way! Look past the tumultuous circumstances and see your sure hope and certain future!" *[pause]*

This takes mental effort, as it doesn't come naturally or easily.

But a heart fixed on hope comes from disciplined thinking.

Preach to yourself everyday, use your mind and dwell on God's Word, so as to set your hope on the grace to come. *[pauseeee]*

**D.L. Moody once gave this illustration that describes someone using their mind to set their hope on the grace to come...**

"A bright young girl of fifteen was suddenly cast upon a bed of suffering, completely paralyzed on one side and nearly blind.

She heard the family doctor say to her parents as they stood by the bedside: "She has seen her best days, poor child!"

"No, doctor," she exclaimed, "my best days are yet to come, when I shall see the King in His beauty." *[pauseeee]*

God cares about the status of our hope, but that's not the only thing he's concerned about, he cares about the status of our holiness.

Our hope and mind matter, but so does our behavior.

**Our holiness matters to God.**

We don't just hope, and live how we want, but we hope and live holy.

And actually our hope prompts us to live according to God's priorities because that's where our focus is.

*And that's why as Peter moves on, he not only tells us to fight the fight of hope, but to...*

## **II. Fight the fight of holiness**

I think we all know that the task to be holy is a fight, don't we?

*It comes natural to be sinful, not holy.*

And that's because we are born sinners. *[pause]*

*But what's our motivation to be holy? Well it's the same as our motivation to be hope-filled...*

### **A. Our motivation: grace**

This once again relates back to the "therefore" at the beginning of verse 13.

*Because of God's gracious work in our lives, and his gracious promises to us, therefore be holy.*

Grace and relationship with God precedes holiness, not the other way around. *[pause]*

*This is so very important for you to remember...*

The commands of the Bible are grounded in grace first.

*Paul does this regularly, as he recounts what God has done, and then he gives a command.  
[pause]*

I find that when it comes to the commands of Scripture there are two different extremes.

*On the one hand, some people emphasize the commands, but they neglect to talk about how grace is needed to do those commands.*

So they will be command-heavy, but what they are doing is turning you into a legalist.

*The way that they emphasize commands is actually detrimental to people because it makes them think that they can gain standing with God based on adherence to the commands. [pause]*

By neglecting the place of grace, they take away the very motivation and empowerment to do the commands!

*And what happens is that you are crushed under the weight of the commands because they have taken the very foundation away. [pauseeee]*

But the other extreme is to be grace-heavy, but neglect to speak about the commands at all.

*It makes you wonder, 'Have they ever read the New Testament?' There are commands all over the place!*

We can't just neglect the commands because we are fearful of being legalistic, but we must see how the Bible frames the commands to us.

And the way the Bible frames the commands is by first speaking about the grace of God. *[pause]*

Peter *doesn't* start out his text by saying, "Be holy! Just do it!"

And you're thinking, "Uhhhh okay. Guess I'll just be holy."

But rather, he starts out his text by saying, "Look at all that God has done for you, you have a new identity because of God's grace, so therefore be holy."

**Do you see the difference?**

Because we have this new relationship with God grounded in his grace towards us, now we have the motivation and empowerment to do his commands. *[pause]*

Grace is our motivation to fight the fight of holiness.

Peter says, "but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." *[pause]*

A motivation is because we are "called".

This means that we are called to God; he has brought us to himself.

**He has called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light.** *[pause]*

This sort of thing reflects Israel's history.

Israel was first delivered by God out of Egypt, they were called to be children of God, and then it's *after* this foundation that God gives the Law.

He first calls them into relationship and then they are called to live holy.

So likewise, we have been called his children, and now we are called to live differently. *[pause]*

Grace motivates our holiness. *[pauseeee]*

**When God's grace is always on your mind, how can you intentionally want to sin against Him?**

When His grace is always on your mind, then you want to be like Him because you are so utterly amazed and grateful for what he has done. *[pause]*

**Are you letting grace motivate your holiness? Or are you trusting in your own self to be holy?**

Don't rely on yourself to be holy - but rely on his Spirit to help you and his grace to motivate you. *[pauseeee]*

*So our motivation is grace, and our goal is....*

## B. Our goal: to be holy like our Father is holy.

Peter commands us to be holy like our Father is holy and he even uses an Old Testament verse to show us this commandment.

It's a commandment that covers both the Old and New Testament time periods.

Meaning, it's not just an Old Testament commandment, but we are called to live holy lives just like Israel was called to do it.

In numerous places in Leviticus, God tells his people to be holy for he is holy.

And now Peter uses it for those who live after Christ, showing how important it is to be holy.  
[pause]

So many Christians nowadays try to act like holiness isn't a big deal, but it is.

In fact, a writer named Kevin DeYoung wrote a whole book about "the hole in our holiness", explaining that often we are passionate about the gospel, but not so much our holiness. [pause]

If you think about American Christianity, are we as a whole passionate and zealous for holiness?  
I'd say, No.

We may be passionate about theology, apologetics, or things like that, but not passionate about our personal holiness.

Yet the Bible has much to say about our holiness, as is clear in this text. [pauseeee]

Holiness is foundationally separation from sin.

Think of how God is completely separate from sin, that's his character, he is holy.

So to be like God is to strive to be holy like God.

It's separation from sin, and a dedication to right living.

And from this passage, we see that holiness isn't a 'take it or leave it' concept, but it is a command.

Therefore, to strive to be holy is obedience to God.

To not strive for holiness is disobedience to God.

That's why Peter says, "as obedient children," we are to be holy. [pause]

God is the ultimate standard for how we should live; he is our standard for holiness.

As God is holy, so we should be holy. [pauseeee]

But that's not all that Peter says in regards to our holiness, for he shows us an important facet of being holy is to "not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance." *[pauseeee]*

When I was in college, during the summer breaks, I would work at a factory that made plastic food containers.

I ran the machines that made these containers and a key part of the process was the mold.

What happened was large sheets of plastic were fed into a machine, where it heated up the plastic...

...And then it went to the mold where the mold would press down on the plastic and conform the plastic into a certain shape. *[pause]*

That's the idea here, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

Don't let them shape how you live. *[pauseeeee]*

The word 'passions' here refers to the evil desires that you have.

They are our self-indulgent cravings. *[pause]*

So it's when you lust after a woman. It's when you desire to steal something from someone else.

It's when you treat others badly because you want comfort.

It's when you are mean to someone because it will feel good to get vengeance.

And the world pushes us to satisfy these evil desires, by saying, "You want it? Get it!" *[pauseeee]*

Yet these evil desires belong to the time of our former ignorance, which speaks of our time before we were saved.

Before salvation, we lived in ignorance of the truth and in ignorance of God.

It is this state that leads people to follow their evil desires over God.

So Peter is saying, "Don't be conformed to your evil desires, those desires belong to a time before you knew what you know now, that belongs to a time before you knew God." *[pause]*

We are called to say, "No," to these evil desires.

The life of obedience means *not* following what feels natural because what feels natural is our sinful desires.

The path of least resistance in born sinners is evil desires, so we must consistently resist these desires. *[pausesee]*

This verse reminds us that there is a constant temptation to be conformed to these passions.

Peter reminds us that while we live on this earth, as Christians, we will still struggle against these desires, but the stronghold and dominion of these things has been broken by Christ.

Now we can combat them and we are able to have significant victories over these evil desires because of Christ.

Not absolute victories over every sin, but significant victories over certain sinful desires. *[pause]*

Peter is teaching us to not be conformed to our evil desires, but conformed to God's holiness instead.

**As Christians, we should live differently than the world!**

In *all* of our conduct, and that means in everything - our mind, our actions, our everything - we should endeavor to be holy like our Father is holy. *[pauseeee]*

Why would you be conformed to the evil desires that belonged to your life before knowing God?

You are a child of God! Don't go back to that way of life!

The scales have fallen off of our eyes, the veil is lifted, and we can see now the folly of living according to our sinful passions. *[pause]*

*And that leads me to our weapon in this fight...*

### **C. Our weapon: our mind**

We use our minds to remind ourselves of our new status in Christ.

**We remind ourselves that we are a child of God.**

'I have a new identity, I am born again, called, and a child of God.'

We remind ourselves that those evil desires belong to our old life, not our new one.

Since I am a child of God, I determine to be like my Father. *[pauseeee]*

I think about how my sons try to imitate what I do because I'm their father - they try to be like me.

So we should try to imitate our Father and live like Him. *[pause]*

**And so we use our minds!**

As obedient children, we try to please our Father, not to gain standing with him, but simply to please him. *[pause]*

You can never lose your salvation, but you can strive to please your good and gracious Heavenly Father out of love for what he has done for you.

And so I obey because of his grace.

I obey because I want to be like Him.

I obey because of his authority, as he has commanded it.

*And I obey because he knows the best way to live. [pauseeee]*

The fight for holiness comes down to this: what is it that shapes your life? Your desires or God's desires?

*What do you let to conform your life? The evil desires of your former ignorance, or your holy and loving Father? [pause]*

As obedient children, let's be holy for our Father is holy!

*Let's fight the fight of holiness, not solely in our own efforts, but propelled forward by his grace! [pause]*

How's your fight for holiness going?

*Have you been giving into your evil desires or do you want to be like God, who has loved you and called you as His child? [pause]*

**We are called to live hope-filled and holy lives!**

Let's circle back to the very beginning...

*When you're going through normal life or face the hardships of life, are you equipped or ill-equipped to live your Christian life?*

How's it going in your life?

*What's your mind focused on on a daily basis? What's your hope set on? How do you live?*

Could your life be characterized as hope-filled? What about holy? [pause]

*Let's strive after these things, but let's do so remembering his grace to us.*

Christ died on the Cross for our sins, and as a result, we have great grace coming to us when he comes again, and we can place our hope there.

*Because Christ died on the Cross for our sins, we can become more holy because he has made us a child of God with the Spirit living within us to help us and empower us. [pauseeee]*

God's grace leads to hope and holiness.