

SERMON 17th MAY 2020
1 Peter 1:13-25

Friends:

“Binge drinking” is when you drink a lot of “alcohol” in one session”!

For “men”, it means drinking more than 6 drinks in one sitting; for “women”, it means drinking more than 4 drinks in one sitting!

- “Short term” risks include: memory loss, hangovers, nausea, vomiting, shakes, alcohol poisoning and increased risk of physical injury!
- “Long term risks” include: memory problems, brain damage, mental health issues, alcohol dependency, heart issues, diabetes, weight gain, liver damage, cancer and sexual problems!
- Please” don’t let me put you “off drinking alcohol”: the Bible speaks of “alcohol” as a good gift from God to be “enjoyed”, but we are not to get “drunk”, especially if you are a leader!
Ps 104:15
Pr 31:6
Eph 5:18
- So this leads to Verse 13 – “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 this coming!”
- Peter “continues” in the 2nd half of Chapter 1 answering the “question”:
- How shall we “now live”?
- What “guidance” does Peter ‘give us’ as we live in society that increasingly “ignores” the church?
- We are to “set” our “hope” on the “certainty” of God!
- Peter is “calling” Christians “like us” to set our hope on this “future salvation” when Christ will ‘return’ and we will receive our promised Heavenly “inheritance”!
- Peter says we learn to set our hope on God’s grace by preparing our minds for action, and being sober minded! **(V13)**
- “Literally” we are to “gird up the lions of our minds”!
- In ‘other words’ we are to “roll up our sleeves” and put our “minds in gear”!
- Peter paints a picture of a man preparing to run or do some exercise!
- “Setting our hope” fully on God requires mental “preparation” and resolve!

Friends:

We “need” to love God with our “mind” as well as our “heart”!

- Setting your “hope” fully on the grace that is to come is an “act of faith” that required “renewed thinking” and “disciplined thinking”!
- As the apostle Paul says in Romans 12:2:

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be “transformed” by the “renewing” of your mind!”
- So we are to be “sober minded”! We think of the word sober in the context of “alcohol”!
- We’ve “already” spoken about how “drunkenness” affects every “aspect” of the “human body”!
- It clouds our judgment; slow our reflexes; it provokes us to do things we wouldn’t normally do!
- Peter is speaking about how the “mind” “determines” or controls our actions!
- He is talking about “mental preparedness”!
- Disciplined “thinking” will control “right” behavior!
- We are to prepare our minds for action by not drinking the philosophies and patterns of this world that intoxicate our minds and make them dull and provoke us to do things that are against God’s “revealed will”!
- “John Stott”, English Anglican Pastor and Theologian (1921-2011) says:

“Knowledge is “indispensable” to Christian life and service. If we do “not use” the “mind” which God has given us, we “condemn” ourselves to spiritual superficiality”!

Friends:

Here is Peter’s “logic”: to “live” as God’s people in our “conduct”, we need to set our “hope” fully on God and his salvation.

We are to “worship” Him “alone”! To set our hope fully, we “need” to be “sober in our thinking” – not “drunk” on the “priorities of this world”; but clear sighted about who God is and all He gives!

- “A W Tozer” (1897-1963) an American Pastor, Author, Magazine Editor, said:-

“What ‘comes’ into our “minds” when we think about God is the “most important” thing about us.... Worship is pure or base as the worshipper entertains “high or low thoughts of God”!”

- Let's take a "look at" **VV14-16**: We are born again by grace and God's Word to be the Father's "look-alike" children!
- 'Ultimately', Christian "ethics" is based on answers to the question: "What is God like?"
- Your "theology" shapes your character and behavior and your virtue!
- We "become" what we "worship"!
- What people revere, they resemble, either for "ruin" or for "restoration"!
- The "Charter" for Israel as the people of God was (**V16**) "Be holy because I am holy!"
Lev 11:44
- "Holiness" is what makes God, "God!" God is set apart, other, different!
- But "although" God is "wholly other", He does not keep His "cosmic distance" from us! There is "no" self-isolating with our God!
- God has come "near" to us in our Saviour Jesus!
He is God "with" us!
- God lives "in us" by his Holy Spirit!
- "Be holy as I am holy"; is a covenant – making declaration, its faith building but also intimidating!
- God "calls us" to "share in" His Holy differentness!
- God's "holiness" cannot be "isolated" from God's "calling of a people"!
- When Jesus "saves and forgives" us, He saves us to be "different", He saves us to grow in Christlikeness! He saves us that we might put to death sin that lives in us and "put on" Jesus' righteousness!

Friends:

As believers we are born "different"; God is the "measure" of how different we are to become!

- Our growing "conformity" to God is "matched" by a "non-conformity" to the culture we were saved from! (**V14**)
- Bishop "J C Ryle" in his classic work on the subject of holiness, said this:-

"Holiness is the habit of being of "one mind" with God, as we find it in Scripture! Holiness is the habit of ageing with God's judgment, hating what He hates, loving what He "loves", and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word!"

- “Jim Packer” said this about “30 years ago” but it is still “highly relevant today”:

“the call to holiness is one the contemporary church urgently needs to “hear”: “the shift of Christian interest away from the pursuit of holiness to focus on fun and fulfillment, massaging egos, techniques for personal success, and public issues that carry “no challenge” to one’s personal morals..... is to “my mind”, a sad and scandalous fact that “needs to be reversed”!”

Friends:

“Holiness”, not gifts, ministry, personal success, or mystical experiences if the “sign” of “true spiritual health”!

(V17) “Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear!”

- God’s “people” are to be holy and are “no longer” at home in this world!
- We are “strangers” in “this world”, our true “citizenship” is in Heaven!

Friends:

Our commitment to be holy like God is “suffused” with a “fear” that takes God “seriously”!

- A “holy” person will follow after the “fear of God”!
- “Not” the “fear of a slave”, who only works because he is afraid of ‘punishment’ and would be “idle” if he did not ‘dread’ discovery!
- “But” the “fear of a child”, who wishes to live and move as if he was always before his father’s face, because he “loves his father”!
- Fear of God’s discipline is a good and proper attitude and is a “sign” of a church growing in maturity and experiencing God’s blessings!

Acts 5:5

- “Fear of God” is “not” inconsistent with loving God or knowing that He loves us!
1 John 4:18
- Fear of “displeasing” God is the “obverse” side of “loving” Him!
- This “awe” for the Father does not drive us away from God, but draws us closer to His ‘care’ and ‘compassion’!
- The “fear of the Lord” is the beginning of wisdom!

Proverbs 9:10

Friends:

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else, “whereas” if you do “not” fear God, you fear everything else!

(Oswald Chambers)

- The One we call “Abba Father” is “not only” our Creator and Judge; He is also our “Redeemer”!
- God the Father has given His Son for us, as a “sacrificial lamb” (1:19)!
- As our Heavenly Father we can confidently “call” on Him because He has revealed the infinite reach of his compassion in the “price” of our redemption!

Eph 3:14-19

- Verses 18 and 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 ancestors; “but” with the precious “blood” of Christ a lamb without blemish or defect!”

The gold price is \$2,607 per ounce; and the silver price is \$23 per ounce!

- But when it comes to eternal life “gold and silver” aren’t much good to us!
- Peter “pulls no punches” when he describes their “former” way of life!
- It was futile, empty-headed and a dead-end!
- So “many people” just take on board what society has handed down to them: they don’t think for themselves or “question” the “status quo”!
- The “remarkable change” brought about by “conversion” to Christ is “seen” in the fact that these “abandoned” “sinful patterns of life” had been inherited from your fathers, an influence made weighty by generations of tradition and worldly wisdom!

Friends:

“The ancient tradition of home and nation is “BROKEN”.... Because the work of Jesus Christ who had “set them free”!”

- The hereditary chain of sin is “broken” by Christ’s “blood”!
- Christ has “power” to break every “chain”!
- Christ “breaks” the power of sin, the power of addiction, the power of unrighteous anger, the power of hate, the power of jealousy, the power of porn, the power of Satan, the power of cancer, the power of Covid-19, the power of death!

- Are you “struggling” with an “issue” that is taking you way from your Heavenly Father? Do you “have” a guilty conscience? The Bible teaches that God cleanses the “conscience”!

Heb 9:13-14

- A “theology of blood” has become unfashionable in our “modern world”, but blood is mentioned 460 times in the Bible; “14 times” in the N.T. Jesus spoke of his own blood! “Why”?
- “Because” by the shedding of His blood, He accomplished the possibility of our “forgiveness and salvation”¹
- The “penalty” for our sin and rebellion is “death”!
- Jesus stepped up and said, “I’ll take that death!”
- Peter stresses in these verses the “costliness” of the “ransom” that is “paid”; he also makes it very “clear” that it is God who pays it! **(V18)**
- Paul tells the “elders” in “Acts 20:28” to be shepherds of the Church of God, which He ‘bought’ with His “own blood”!

Friends:

God in Christ shed his “own blood” for you!

- “Consider” this great “cast” to “redeem you”; “meditate” on what Jesus has accomplished and be “motivated” to “pursue holiness”! for “without holiness” “no one” will see the Lord!
Heb 12:14
- Verse 20 “He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for “your sake”!

Friends:

What an “action packed verse”!

- Peter “wants” us to know that our salvation was “not” a “divine after thought”!
- It was “not” God’s reaction to a “world” that “went of the rails”!
- “Of course” the Father knew the Son before the foundation of the world; the Son is “eternal”; the Father not only “foreknew” the people whom He would “elect”; He also “foreknew” the “means” by which He would save them – and that is “Jesus”!
- According of God’s “plan”, Jesus would be “made manifest” in these last days! God “always knew” that this was His plan of redemption!
- The “plan was “eternal”; its operations was “historical”!

- In God's "sovereign timing", Jesus was "revealed" at the "right time"! The "manifestation" refers to Jesus' "incarnation"! When Christ appeared to save us from our sins – when he came to live, and die, and rise and return to glory. **(VV 20 & 21)**
- The apostle Paul says in Galatians 4:4:
"But when the "fullness of the time" came, God sent His Son born of a woman, both under the Law!" God has a "plan" for this world and it's a "perfect" plan!

Ps 33:11
- "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass!"

(WCF)
- Like God, His "plan" is eternal. His plan is all-encompassing! When our plans "fail" it is often because we have "overlooked some detail"! However God's plan is "all-inclusive"! It is based on God's 'omniscience', so that everything past, present and future is taken into account!
- Every contingency is taken into account in God's plan. God's plan is for "all creation", things in heaven and on earth, things visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities.

Col 1:16
- God's plan includes seemingly insignificant details!
- His plan 'excludes' "good luck" or coincidences!
- God's "plan" includes the election of some individuals for salvation and some to destruction!

Acts 13:48
John 1 12-13
- "Apart" from God's intervention, through His Holy Spirit, "no man" seeks God, and "no man" will ever find Him!

John 6:44
- The "goal" of God's plan is to bring "glory to Himself!"

Num 14:21

Friends:

When we repent of our sin, turn back to God and desire – to live for His sake; John Piper sums it up well; *God will be most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him!*

- Don't overlook the final 3 words of verse "20":
"for our sake!"
- The "astonishing truth" of this eternal plan of God in Christ is for our sake!

- God did all of this for your and your salvation!
- We don't deserve it, we haven't 'earnt' it, it is all of God! By grace we are saved, by grace we live for Christ in His strength and by His power!
- "Before" an "individual" can be "saved", he must "first learn" that he "cannot" "save" himself!

(Mr Deltann)

Friends:

Keep on "calling" on God, keep "praying"; "prayer", in many ways; is the "supreme expression" of our "faith in God"!

- Verse 22 – Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth is that you have sincere love for each other, "love on another deeply, from the heart"!
- It's "common" today to hear a professing Christian saying that they "love Jesus", but "not the church"!
- They might "feel" that the church is filled with "hypocrites" who are even worse than those who deny Christ! They might themselves have been "hurt" by a church member!
- Some see the church as an obstacle to reaching the world with the Gospel of Grace!
- I have to admit unfortunately that in many of these "critiques" there is truth!
- Still, are these "legitimate reasons" for professing Christians to abandon the church?
- I want to say "NO"!
- "Yes" find a new church if your church doesn't preach "God's Word" and exalt the Lord Jesus; but it doesn't mean giving up on the church!
- Peter has much to say about the "local church": and here in **V22** he begins by showing that a New Testament Church – a body of people who have been born again through God's Living Word: is a body characterized by "love for each other"!
- Purifying "yourself" is a "deep process"! It entails the progressive cleansing of our personality of wrong attitudes, old hurts, and memories of past sins! This "process" takes a lifetime "relying" on the Holy Spirit's help!
- We need to "set ourselves" apart for God; we need to dedicate "ourselves" wholly to God! "Later on" Peter will say "in your hearts set Christ apart as Lord!" In "other words" give Jesus first place in your lives!"
- "Have sincere love for each other!"

- Brotherly “love” is “great” in theory!”
- It is the “practice” that is difficult!
- This is the “standard” for “church life”!
- Christians have been “purified” by God’s Word and the “expression” of this is “true love” “towards” heir brothers and sisters in Christ!
- Brotherly “love’ is described as being “sincere”! “Sincerity” means: literally “hypocritical”! Christian love is not just an act we put on; it is “genuine”!
- Peter goes on to say that our brotherly “love” (Philadelphia) should find expression in God’s “love” (agape)!
- Our “love”, our “affection” is to be deep and strong, even “fervent”! This passionate love must not be two-faced!
- Paul says “Owe no man anything, “but” to ‘love one another¹”

Rom 13:8

- Jesus in ‘John 13:35’ gives the world “permission” to “judge” the “genuineness” of our Christian faith on the basis of “a sincere brotherly love”! And if that is not “startling enough”, John 17:22-23 also “suggests” that Jesus gives the world permission to judge the truthfulness of his incarnation on the basis of Christian love and unity!

Friends:

If the unbelieving world looks at the church, “our church” and “sees” hypocrisy, division, malice, deceit, jealousy, envy and the like, it has every right to “wonder” if we are really Christians and worse to reject Christ – to dismiss Jesus and the church!

- The “sense” of this Verse 22 is: Once you have begun to grow in “holiness” so that you have a “genuine affection” for one another, make your love for each other earnest, deep and strong!
- One of the “first” marks of genuine growth in “holiness” (**V16**) in individuals and in churches is earnest love for fellow Christians!
- The “gospel of Jesus” can help “you” be better lovers!
- Verse 23 – “For you have been “born again”, not of perishable seed, but of “imperishable”, through the living and enduring Word of God!”
- We need to truly grasp (**V22**) because we all know people who are “hard to love!” Not just the obnoxious and annoying but people who have betrayed us and hurt us!

- How can we be “expected” to love such people?
- While it is “true” that it is hard to love the unlovable person, it is “possible” – we have seen it done, “because” it is precisely what our Lord Jesus Christ had done! **(V19)**
- So Peter in **(V23)** reminds us again of our new birth!
- We “ourselves” have experienced sincere, “undeserved love!”
- We were “not” born again on the basis of “human procreation”!
- Natural birth is produced by perishable seed; “but” our new birth was with “imperishable seed”, the Eternal Word of God!
- **V24** reveals the “different” results of the “two seeds”! One leads to “death”, the other leads to “life everlasting”!

Friends:

True “holiness” leads to true “love”!

You’ll only “grow” in holiness as you “continue” in God’s Word! **(V25)**

- Our Heavenly Father is ‘love’!
- In “love”, our elder brother Jesus dies in “our place” so that we might ‘live’! “Love” is in our “DNA!” Jesus teaches us what it looks like to treasure God above all else and “how to love”!
- In this “isolation period” “what” are you “setting” your heart and love on?

Let’s Pray!!