

## **Studies in I Peter (33)**

### The Exhortation of Salvation -- Live As A Christian

#### Introduction

- A. The theme of this book is the grace of God. Peter develops that message in both Epistles. Note how both books close with a summary reference to divine grace (I Peter 5:10; II Peter 3:18).
- B. Peter develops that theme by emphasizing how different the believer is because of the grace of God. He also presents many exhortations which indicate how the Christian should live out that grace.
- C. The text before us (2:11,12) is a transition passage. In 1:3-2:10 we have The Grace of God in the Believer's Salvation. Starting with our text we have the emphasis placed on The Responsibilities in Daily Life Because of the Grace of God.
- D. The text:

*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Having your conversation (daily life) honest among the Gentiles (non-Christians), that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. I Peter 2:11,12*

#### I. The Basis of the Exhortation.

##### A. "Dearly beloved"

- 1. This term, rarely used for non-Christians, indicates that Peter is writing to believers for whom he has a deep concern.
- 2. The Lord Jesus prayed for Peter that he would be one who would "strengthen the brethren" (Luke 22:32). We see in these verses how God enable Peter to do that. We can do what God asks us to do!
- 3. The thought developed in our text reminds us that, because we are believers, we have a far greater responsibility in daily life regarding sin and righteousness than the non-Christian. Peter recognized that, and wrote these Epistles, and now exhorts the believers in Asia Minor to live as the believers they are.

##### B. "Strangers and Pilgrims."

- 1. The believer is a "stranger" in regard to the non-Christian world.
  - a. The Christian, in the new birth, was separated from the world system that is largely under the control of Satan. John 15:19; Eph. 2:1-3.
  - b. Peter's appeal is based upon what God in His grace has done for them. They are not a part of the world and should not live as though they were. As believers we must learn to recognize worldliness.  
I John 2:16

2. The believer is a "pilgrim" in regard to his goal in life.
  - a. A pilgrim is one traveling through a foreign country. He is not a citizen. He is going home.
  - b. The Christian's goal is to glorify God by living in harmony with the kingdom where we are citizens. We are told to "seek the things which are above" (Colossians 3:1) because our "citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20 NIV).

## **II. The Content of the Exhortation.**

- A. "Abstain from sinful desires, which war against the soul." NIV
  1. As believers we must refuse all thoughts and actions that are sinful. How prone we are to pride, self-centeredness, immoral desires, laziness, fear, doubt, anger, criticism, skepticism, love of pleasure, and love of money. We conform to the world so easily.
  2. Such desires "war against the soul." The sad effects of such desires are easily seen among us -- lack of hunger for God and His Word, lack of concern for the lost, lack of the joy of the Lord, lack of the fruit of the Spirit.
  3. When the believer gives way to "sinful desires" it is an invitation to sin and Satan to come and enslave. We would never permit someone to rob us repeatedly of our possessions -- but we permit that in our spiritual life and never seem to be concerned. We may not live that way.
- B. "Having your conversation (daily life) honest."
  1. Those to whom Peter wrote were being persecuted. In the early days of the Church many unfounded accusations were made against the Christians. They were said to be immoral, cannibalistic, atheistic, and unpatriotic.
  2. The word "honest" is broader than our use of the word today. The word "good" would be more clear today. The same word is translated "good" later in this verse as "good works."
  3. The importance of "good works" in the life of believers is found in the way God will use such a testimony. Peter states the non-Christian will observe such works and "glorify God in the day of visitation."
  4. Many commentators believe Peter is not referring to the final judgment here but to those times when God humbles a person in conviction and brings them to the place of accepting the truth of the gospel. What the Lord will use to do that -- is the good works of believers.
  5. Many have been saved by observing the godly life of a believer. In early church history we have the testimony of Justin Martyr (110-165).

"For I myself, too, when I was delighting in the doctrines of Plato, and heard the Christians slandered, and saw them fearless of death ... and perceived it was impossible that they could be living in wickedness and pleasure ... I confess that I strive to be found a Christian."  
(Second Apology, 12; Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol I.)