

HOLINESS - August 1, 2014

“THE LIFESTYLE OF THE SAVED” - PART I

DR. BRUCE BICKEL

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Bruce: Good morning, brothers.

Men: Good morning.

Bruce: It's good to be with you. I was fly fishing last week with one of my clients. It was a tough job. (*Laughter.*) I had a Foundation meeting in Maine, about a hundred yards from the Canadian border. One day of a Foundation meeting and three days of fly fishing. (*Laughter.*) Hey, listen! No electricity. We didn't have running water. Butane lights, good food, no cell phone, no GPS, and no telephone. It was wonderful!

(The piano accompanist plays a segment from the song “King of the Road.”)

Bruce: Back into the world! Well, let's go before the Lord. Don, take us into His presence again, and let's just prepare our hearts for what He might have for us this morning. Let's silently go to prayer. (*Music.*)

Heavenly Father, it is amazing grace. How grateful we are that You did for us that which we could not do for ourselves. Father, as we consider the implications of the fall of man, we just realize that it could be nothing but grace that saves us. So, Father, it is just truly amazing and truly glorious, and we just thank You, for Jesus' sake, that You just permit us to be in Your presence on an eternal basis. We pray that Your Holy Spirit would descend upon us, be our Teacher, and guide us into all truth. And may it be so, for Jesus' sake, that we might behold You more clearly, for His honor and glory. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: I'd like you to open your bibles, please, to the first chapter of the book of 1 Peter. We'll be examining verses 13-16. You have an outline, and the fact is that we'll be examining them today, for your consideration. Let us hear the word of the Lord, as recorded for us in the epistle of 1 Peter chapter 1, beginning at verse 13. I'll be reading from the English Standard Version of the New Testament.

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God!

Bruce: I want to thank Jim for his excellent presentation on the complications and the results of the Fall last week. I asked him to do that specifically at the timing in between the segway of what we had been learning previously, and what we're going to study today.

Previously, in the first twelve verses, we've been discovering that Peter is teaching us about our gracious and glorious salvation, how gracious and glorious our salvation is. And brothers, you will never understand how gracious your salvation is, and how glorious your salvation is, until you understand completely the implications of the fall of

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man. That's why I had Jim go between what we had talked about in the first twelve verses and what we're going to discover today.

Well, I hope you really understood what Jim was teaching us, because that is so critical, because, to the degree to which you and I understand the implications of the Fall will be the degree to which you and I understand the graciousness of our salvation, and its glorious aspect in our lives. And that is because there is a wonderful principle in Scripture that goes like this: doctrine precedes conduct. Doctrine precedes practice.

You'll notice that this is what Peter is teaching us now. He has taught us, in verses 1-12, that we have a glorious and gracious salvation through the grace of God, in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. It is gracious and it's glorious. Now that is doctrine. And to the degree to which you understand those first twelve verses will implicate and influence the way that we live verses 13-16, which we're going to examine today, because now he takes us into a passage, and says, "Now put into practice the doctrines that you have just learned in the first twelve verses."

You notice the transition with the word "therefore" that you see in verse 13. In other words, the degree to which you understand the doctrine of the gracious and glorious salvation which I just described to you in the first twelve verses impacts how you're going to live out the practice of that doctrine in verses 13-16, which we'll examine today.

Doctrine precedes practice, and practice validates your doctrine. Practice will validate your doctrine. It doesn't prove it, because doctrine is proved by itself. But it will validate the fact that you understand the doctrine. Now that's why I asked Jim to teach us in this segway between understanding the first twelve verses of our gracious and glorious salvation. We need to understand the implications of the fall of man so that you'll understand the glory of your salvation, because that's going to impact the way you live that out, because you're now going to prove the validity of the doctrine you believe by the quality of your life. That's what Peter is going to teach us today.

So we have seen, in our first twelve verses, the description of our gracious and glorious salvation. We have a gracious birth, in verses 1-2. We have a living hope in verses three and four. We have a powerful protection in verse five. And we have a great rejoicing in verses 6-9. Now that is the way that Peter describes the gracious and glorious salvation that we have in the Person and work of Christ. It is a gracious birth, a living hope, a powerful protection, and a great rejoicing.

And now, beginning in verse 13, he emphasizes living in holiness. "Therefore," you'll see in verse 13, "preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but, as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." He is now going to make a transition from the doctrine of our gracious and glorious salvation into the validity of our proving our doctrine by the way that we live our lives. That's why I call this "*The Lifestyle of the Saved*." Peter is now ready to describe what a saved person's lifestyle looks like. That is what he is going to teach us today.

The word "therefore" in verse 13 means that, in view of the fact that you and I understand our gracious and glorious salvation, we will live a life that is governed by the

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future hope of Christ's return. In other words, the degree to which you and I understand the glory of the salvation that we have, being fully revealed when Christ returns, it's going to impact the way that you live. That's what Peter is teaching us.

One of the great things I appreciate about all the Puritans that I read during my doctoral work in England was that they had such a wonderful view of Christ's return, of Jesus coming back. And they were very heavenly minded. Now they were earthly good, but because of their heavenly mindset it impacted the quality of their lives. In other words, they looked forward to Christ's return. It was not defeatism. It was the great illustration of hope, of realizing that the gospel that I have and the salvation that I have is going to be more fully revealed when He returns in all of His glory. So they had this great anticipation of Christ's return. So then, we have a life to discover by our future hope of the salvation that will be fully revealed when Christ returns.

Essentially, Peter says that salvation produces holiness. Our saving faith is a result of what God did. We've seen that in verses 1-12. Our saving faith is a result of what God did, and our expressed faith, which is holiness, is a result of our recognizing that God did it. That's what the word "therefore" means in verse 13.

So I want you to understand what Peter is talking about when he describes the lifestyle of the saved. I remember, I think, several years ago there was a TV show called "The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." This is the lifestyle of the saved, and it is based upon the degree to which you and I understand the implications of the Fall, and the implications and beauty of our gracious and glorious salvation which is described for us in verses 1-12.

So what does Peter say we are to do? "Therefore," he says, "prepare your minds." I want you to see three things about the principle of the lifestyle of the saved. I want you to see the mindset in verse 13, the motive in verse 14, and the mark of the saved person in verse 15. That's what we'll look at over the next couple of weeks. But today, we'll only have time to go through the mindset of verse 13.

Now you can take that mindset that Peter is going to talk to us about in verse 13, and divide that into the preparation for the mind, the purpose of the mind and the pattern of the mind. That's the outline that you have today.

So let's take a look at the preparation. He says, "Prepare your minds for action." That's the way the NIV translates it. The New American Standard Version translates verse 13 "gird your minds." Now, whether it's "gird your mind," or "prepare your mind," this is an Oriental expression that Peter is using that is referring to the act of gathering up around the waist the long and loose robes which would impede one's progress in running, or other exertion activities. In other words, that is what that word means. "Gird your minds." There is a great theological understanding of that.

Let me give you some examples. It really, literally, means this: Be ready to move. It means "gird your mind for action." Prepare your mind. You can't be ready to move unless you're thinking correctly.

Now the Christian lifestyle is not an outward life. The mind is the battleground. Here the battles of life are won or lost. And Peter says, (*paraphrase*), "Prepare your minds by thinking correctly," thinking Biblically. Let me give you some illustrations of the

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concept of girding up your robes, and being ready for action, and being prepared to move out.

Look at Exodus chapter 12, verse 11. Hear the instructions for observing the Passover in Exodus chapter twelve. “This is how you are to eat the Passover, with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste.” In other words, He’s saying, (*paraphrase*) “Israel, be ready to move out!” Now you can’t be ready to move out unless you prepare your mind to do that. That is exactly what Peter is teaching us when he says, “Gird your mind,” or “prepare your mind.”

How about another illustration in 1 Kings chapter 18, verse 46, dealing with the prophets of Baal? “The power of the Lord came upon Elijah. And tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.”

How about Luke chapter 12, verse 35, another illustration? I’m trying to help you understand the concept of what Peter is saying when he uses that Greek word “prepare your mind,” or “gird up your mind.” He’s saying, “Get ready for action; be ready to move out.” But you can’t be ready to move out unless you’re thinking, and prepared to do that. So the first thing he says is that if you’re going to move out and live the lifestyle of the saved, you’ve got to prepare your mind to do so. “Gird up your mind.”

Here’s another illustration. Luke chapter 12, verse 35. “Be dressed, ready for service, and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their Master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when He comes and knocks, they can immediately open the door for Him.” In other words, Peter is saying this. If you’re going to be ready for action, be ready to move out, you’ve got to think correctly. Your way of thinking must be right. It must be ready, it must be prepared, if you’re going to live a life that understands the doctrine of your gracious and glorious salvation.

The battleground of going from doctrine to practice is your mind. What are you thinking about? Peter says, (*paraphrase*) “Put out of the way, once and for all, everything that will impede your mind from thinking correctly, from thinking Biblical, godly thoughts.” Prepare your mind. Get rid of those things, because you anticipate the revelation of your salvation when the Lord returns in all of His glory.

So what is it that impedes our thinking? Well, I would say that some of the things that might do that would be our emotions, perhaps the emotions of guilt, the emotions of resentment, the emotions of anxiety. They all have to do with the setting of our goals. Sometimes, when we have our goals set, and we don’t achieve them, we feel guilty because we didn’t do it. Sometimes, you think that somebody interfered with the achievement of your goals. Therefore, you say, “I resent the fact that somebody impeded it.” It might be a situation. It might be a person who does that. Or you might be anxious by the fear of failure.

John Howell, one of my favorite Puritans, a rather unknown Puritan brother, makes this statement. “You must be able to do something imperfectly, or you will never grow.” You’ve got to be willing to do something imperfectly, or you’ll never grow and mature. How often do we not do something because we say, “I can’t do it well.” Well, no kidding! You’re never going to do things perfectly. Now, as Peter says, you’ve got to get your mind right, and you’ve got to think correctly. And John Howell is saying that, if the

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Lord is leading you to do something, don't be fearful about it. Don't be anxious about it. Don't be resentful. Don't feel guilty about it. Just do it in response to the Lord, because you're trusting Him. And do it, realizing that you're not going to do it perfectly.

Let me give you that again. How often do we not do something when we feel the nudging of the Lord? It's because I can't do it well. Somebody else can do it better. You see, if you get your mind right, you're ready to move. You're ready for action. You're prepared to do the service. Yes, Tom?

Tom: I think that so often we forget that while we are focused on the results, and grade ourselves accordingly, God is more concerned about the process, and all we're going through.

Bruce: Absolutely. You see, the real issue is, am I pleasing to the Lord, not implicating my perfection or my imperfection. Do not be afraid to do something imperfectly, or you will never grow. So be prepared, renewing your mind.

You see, what Peter is telling us is this: Your outlook determines your outcome. Your attitude determines your actions. And Peter is saying that a person who remembers the glorious and gracious salvation, and is looking to the Lord's return for the full fulfillment and revelation of that salvation, is going to be more motivated for obedience than somebody who doesn't understand his salvation. That's why I wanted Jim to teach us the implications of the Fall. The degree to which you and I understand the implications of the fall of man will impact the way that you view your salvation. And the way that you view your gracious and glorious salvation is going to indicate the way in which you live your life, because you're preparing your mind correctly. You've got to think correctly about two things—the result of the Fall, and the gracious and glorious salvation that Jesus has given to us as a result of the fall of man. It's a gracious and glorious salvation. It is really of amazing grace.

So, our preparation for living in holiness begins with our minds. But then I want you to see this. Next, we see that a disciplined mind leads to the purpose of our preparation. First of all, we had the preparation. In other words, you've got to think correctly. Remember the card we gave you—think, act, feel? We have that little card. You've got to think correctly. Paul says it this way in Romans 12. "Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds." In other words, if you and I are not thinking correctly, we're not preparing ourselves correctly.

And what is one of the ways in which we prepare ourselves to think correctly? Through prayer. Prayer is preparation for the proper response at the next event that occurs in your life. An example would be in John 18, when Peter, the one who is writing this book for us, writing this wonderful letter, when the authorities came to take Jesus into captivity to take Him to the cross, he drew his sword out and cut the ear off of the high priest's slave. Jesus said, "Put your sword back into its sheath," because (*paraphrase*), "if you live by the sword you will die by the sword."

Now what had Peter been doing prior to that event? He was sleeping in the garden. James, Peter and John were asleep. What was Jesus doing in preparation for that event?

Men: Praying.

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Bruce: Prayer. Prayer is preparation for the right response when the next event occurs in your life. That's how you prepare your mind! This is not just positive mental thinking, folks. It's discipline. It's a choice, girding your mind. You do that through prayer. You pray that God will give you the grace to have the proper response at the next event that comes into your life. That is how you prepare your mind to be ready for service.

In other words, as he told the Israelites, as Moses said, (*paraphrase*), "Be prepared to move out." You've got to think correctly. Be ready to move out. Prepare your mind. Now that's the preparation.

Now there is a purpose behind that, and that is what we need to understand next. And that is, be self-controlled. Notice the next thing that he says in verse 13. First of all, he says, "Prepare your minds for action. And being sober-minded." Now what do we mean by "sober-minded?" It's a very interesting word. It literally means "sober in spirit," as translated by the New American Standard—sober in mind, or sober in spirit. In other words, unless you're prepared in your mind, you'll never be self-controlled or sober in spirit.

Now the word *sober* means this: to be calm and collected in spirit. Unless you prepare your mind correctly through prayer, you'll never be sober in spirit, calm and collected in your spirit, when an event occurs in your life. Literally, it means to be free from anything that intoxicates your mind. That's what it means. That's what the word *sober* means.

He's using the illustration of a drunkard. What happens when a person is overwhelmed by alcohol? He loses the soberness of his mind. He is no longer sober. But Peter is saying, Look! You've got to prepare your mind, first of all, to think right. Secondly, you need to remove anything that is going to intoxicate the way that you think.

What are those things? I don't know what they are in your life. I'm trying to find out my own. (*Laughter.*) But there are certain things that intoxicate me, and hinder me from being prepared for action. You've got to be sober minded. We translate that to mean self control. It speaks of the exercise of the mind, in which the individual is self-controlled, and recognizes on a personal basis those individual things that intoxicate his mind, and hinder his being prepared for action. That's what that word means, sober- minded. It's a very, very clear indication.

Jesus mentions this idea of sober-mindedness in Luke chapter 21, verses 34 and 35, when he says this. "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap." That's what Jesus says about this. You've got to find out, brothers, what are the things that intoxicate the way that you think? You need to be careful of those things. You see, you'll never have your mind prepared for action, ready to move, until you understand what things you need to eliminate that intoxicate the way that you think.

And then Jesus goes on to say this in Luke chapter 21. "For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you will be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you will be able to stand before the Son of Man. Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life."

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See, oftentimes, friends, you and I need to remove the anxieties of our lives that intoxicate us. You see, the anxieties of life are like a drunkenness. They're like an alcoholic, who just has to go back, and go back, and they lose their self-control. That is what he's saying about the way that you think. You'll lose your self control if you're intoxicated by the anxieties of life. That's why prayer is so important, as a preparation for us to have the right response at the next event in our lives.

So what Peter is saying, friends, is to be careful to see things clearly. Here's the way John Calvin writes about this verse on sober-mindedness. "He is not talking about drinking, but spiritual sobriety." Not physical sobriety, but spiritual sobriety, "when all our thoughts and affections are subject, as not to be inebriated with the allurements of the world." Don't be inebriated by the allurements or the anxieties of the world. "For since even the least taste of them," (the allurements of the world, the anxieties of life), "stealthily draw us away from God. When one plunges himself into these," (into the allurements of this world), "he necessarily becomes sleepy and stupid, and he forgets God and the things of God."

You see, that's what Peter is saying. Prepare your mind for action. Be ready to move. Let's move out! Get ready. Get your gear ready. The way you do that is through prayer, because prayer is preparation for the right response at the next event. The next thing you do is to get rid of those things, the allurements of this world, that are going to intoxicate the way that you think, that will hinder your preparation and your preparedness. Get rid of those things.

So how can we develop a sober-mindedness? What do we do to work on these things? Let's take a look at 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 7. That might give us some insight, because Peter is the one who wrote this letter. He might have some insights on how we develop sober-mindedness.

Let's go to 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 7. "The end of all things is at hand. Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded, for the sake of your prayers." In other words, when you go to pray, what do you think about? Do you ever think about preparing yourself to pray? In my thinking, one of the greatest things we can do to have a vital prayer life is to prepare ourselves. What is the best way to prepare ourselves for prayer?

Participant: Meditation.

Bruce: Study the Scripture. Meditate on the Scripture. Prepare yourself to know what to pray for by reading the Scripture. That's what Peter is saying here in 4:7. "The end of all things is at hand." There is the anticipation of events that are going to occur. "Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded, for the sake of your prayers." In other words, get your mind right before you pray. Have we relegated God to be just a heavenly gopher? Go for this, and go for that? Or do we realize that God is the sovereign Lord of the universe, and that His will is more about Him than it is about my decisions? God's will is about His will, not about my decisions. Be prepared for the sake of your prayers, Peter teaches us. In other words, you consider Christ's return. If you and I are inebriated or impacted or controlled by the causes of this world, you will not want to pray. You will not want to pray if you're overwhelmed or inebriated by the anxieties of this life. Peter is

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telling us that a holy person is a praying person, because that is how you prepare your mind.

Look at 1 Peter chapter 5, verse 8, as another illustration. And here's the second reason. The first reason that you prepare your mind to be sober minded, and how you do that, is to anticipate Christ's return. I look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus in all of His glory. That gives me a single focus, reminding us of what? God is sovereign. The world doesn't revolve around me; it revolves around Him and His glory. So the first thing we consider in being sober- minded is Christ's return.

Now Peter gives us another illustration, something else we need to think about to prepare our minds to be sober- minded, and that is this, in 1 Peter 5:8. "Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." In other words, the second thing you need to do to become sober-minded is to consider Satan's attack. Two things that help us to be sober-minded, not to be inebriated by the allurements of this world, first of all, is to think about Christ's return. It reminds us of God's sovereignty and His great glory. It reminds us of the revelation of the completeness of our salvation when the Lord Jesus returns. Focus upon the Lord's return. That's what the Puritans did. That's why they were able to live lives that were so radically different from the world at that time in history. It was because they considered the Lord's return in all of His glory.

The second thing Peter says is this. To be sober-minded, not to be inebriated by the allurements of this world, consider Satan's attack. He's like a roaring lion, waiting to devour someone. So, in other words, the reason you consider his attacks is why? So you can resist him! If you don't understand how he operates, you're not going to know and to understand how to resist him. So we focus upon Christ's return, and we consider Satan's attacks. Consider Christ's return and Satan's attacks, and you'll become sober-minded, because one deals with Christ in His glory, and the other deals with our spiritual warfare. Both are very sobering thoughts. See that? When you consider Christ's return, that's a sobering thought. When you consider Satan's attack, that's a sobering thought. One deals with Christ in His glory, and the other one deals with our spiritual warfare. Ephesians chapter six: Put on the full armor of God.

Friends, we need to think correctly if we're going to act correctly. And Peter says that, to be sober minded, you need to do two things. Prepare your minds, first of all, for action. Get rid of all the allurements of this world, and think correctly, through prayer. Prepare yourselves for prayer. And when you do that, consider two things: the glory of Christ's return, and the subtlety of Satan's attacks. When you do that, you'll be very sober- minded, because both of those are very, very sobering thoughts.

Peter is telling us this. Sobriety or self control, is a virtue. It not only prevents us from things which are prohibited by God, but also moderates us in the use of things which are permitted by God. Let me do that again. You see, sometimes we take too much license in the things that are permitted by God. Sobriety or self control is a virtue that not only keeps us from the things which are prohibited by God, but also moderates us in the use of things which are permitted by God.

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The person who prepares his mind by removing impediments to biblical thinking is the person who will have the spirit of a calm and quiet dignity, which so befits and benefits the holy person. You see, Peter is saying this. If you really understand what I've written to you in verses 1-12, than you understand the implications of the gracious and glorious salvation that you have. And you understand, in the context of understanding the results of the fall of man, and you now understand how gracious and glorious your salvation is. That's going to impact the way that you think. And the way that you think is going to determine the way that you act. He's describing for us the first indications of the lifestyle of the saved person. It begins in the battle of your mind, and that is to be prepared in your mind, to be sober in spirit.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes?

Participant: We've talked about God keeping us from the things that have been prohibited, and moderating the things permitted. Can you talk about moderating—

Bruce: We can do that. Sure!

Participant: I've become more and more convinced of the need for Christians to live a moderate and modest life.

Bruce: Let's talk about that for a moment. Ted has brought up a good point. Not only does thinking correctly and being sober-minded prohibit us from doing the things God prohibits, but it also moderates us in the things He permits. Let's take worship, for instance. How have we worshiped? Have we worshiped correctly? Or have we made worship something that is so oriented toward the people, and less for God's glory? You see, worship is something that God has permitted us to do. But have we done it correctly? Have we moderated the way that we worship? Or have we viewed it to the point that it now becomes entertainment? Not to answer that question, but all I'm saying is that those are some of the things we have to look at.

How about the use of wealth? How about the use of our funds? There is nothing wrong with money. In fact, the Scripture is full of people who are wealthy. But the real issue is, is the love of money, not the money itself. Money is nothing more than a transaction. It's the love of that, with the inebriation and the impact that it has upon our minds that impacts us.

So how do we live out the moderation of the things that God permits us? What are some of the things that God permits that we might not manage correctly? I would say that worship is one of them. Worship is one of the things that I don't think we manage well, because we have now turned it into something that is for the entertainment of the people who come, rather than for the glory of God. That would be one illustration. What would you suggest is something we need to do that would be more moderate in the way we live our lives, that God permits? Yes, Ted?

Ted: I've done a lot of thinking about this. The problem we have in our culture is that we have so much wealth. Even those of us who are not doing well have so much more than any other time, and it seems to me that we often, as Christians, say, "Well, I'm giving my ten per cent, and the rest is for me." I see Christians who have trophy houses,

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trophy cars. It's a showing of status and wealth. I think we've lost the sense of living modestly and moderately. I mean, I just have a lot of clothes.

Bruce: No, I agree. I think it's true. It's interesting. When I was with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, back in the '70s and early '80s, I was not involved in our fundraising effort. We had another vice president for development. But he always used to say, "Well, the pro athletes make all the money I'm funding you."

Brothers, one time I did a little research on one particular area to see how much all the pro athletes of the United States of America who claimed to be Christians funded the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the total amount was \$94,000. (*Laughter.*) Fifty of that came from one player, who was a good friend of mine. Now all these guys are saying, "Well, I want to make all this money and take care of my family." Well, that's nice. "And then I didn't have more money to give." I'll tell you what. If you haven't learned the discipline of giving when you have nothing, you will not learn the discipline of giving when you have more. You know, if you don't know how to manage a hundred dollars, you're never going to do well with a million dollars. You see, that's the moderation that we need to consider that Ted is alluding to, and I would agree with that. We need to be very understanding that not only does sober-mindedness impact the things that God prohibits, but also it teaches us to think correctly about the things that He permits. How do we live them moderately, and manage them that way? Yes, please?

Participant: It's being in the world, but not of it.

Bruce: Yes, we need to be in the world, but not of it. Exactly. Yes, Tom?

Tom: I also think that your thinking becomes your actions. We don't realize that that is how we evangelize, not by going out and asking people, "Are you saved, brother?", but that people watch us. And the Bible says that by the way you love each other, they'll know you are Christians. We forget that we're living epistles.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Tom: And so we don't discipline ourselves to live in the Word. We live in the world.

Bruce: Yes, we are in the world, but not of the world. Yes, Sig?

Sig: I wanted to pick up on what you were saying. My trouble with moderation is, when I discuss something of importance with fellow Christians about our faith, our world, or decisions we have to make as Christians, too much of the world seems to come in. I get tradition, I get reason, and also Scripture, and I wonder, is that in moderation? I mean, is this like, do these other two things carry as much weight as Scripture? And I'm wondering if that's what Ted was talking about there.

"Our culture now—"

"Well, that was two thousand years ago. We live in a different world now."

I mean, that's troubling to me, because some of the decisions we make, especially those of us in leadership in our churches, you know, I look at the Scripture as being more of the foundation, so am I moderating the Scripture too much, to give it equal balance with reason and tradition?

Bruce: That's a good question. I can't answer that for you. The Holy Spirit can. But that's a great issue. The real battleground for me, in many of these issues of moderation is this: Is the Scripture sufficient? It's the sufficiency of Scripture. Do I really believe

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that Scripture is sufficient to teach me how to live life at its highest level, and honor God and worship Him correctly?

Let me take you to 2 Peter chapter 1. Turn over just a couple pages to 2 Peter. We'll get to this in depth later. But notice 2 Peter chapter 1, beginning at verse 1. "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." Now there is a good definition of church growth. The definition of church growth is right there. "May grace and peace be multiplied to you, in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ." That's church growth.

Now, notice then. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence." His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. The word "life" there means quality of life. It doesn't mean the times of your life; it means the quality of life. Do you really believe, men, that Scripture gives you all you'll ever need to know about how to live life at its highest level? That's what I mean when I say the sufficiency of Scripture. Do you really believe that? Then you need to understand that you've got to moderate that. There is the freedom that God has given us, but we need to moderate that and not abuse it, as Sig might be suggesting.

The second thing is godliness. The word "godliness" means worship rightly directed. The Scripture teaches you two things, above all things. First of all, it's the revelation of Jesus Christ and all of His glory in the act of redemption. But the implications in your life practically, the practice of our doctrine, is this. The Scripture is sufficient to teach me how I need to live life at its highest level, and also how to worship God correctly. And what more could we want? Yes, Don?

Don: I'm going to step on toes now, but getting back to moderation,--

Bruce: Uh-huh. Please.

Don: I know that, if we're in a stadium watching the Pirates or Steelers play, oh, we yell and we scream. And yet, if someone were evangelizing to someone, and talking, and getting excited about his faith, "You're a fanatic!" We don't want to be fanatics! Well the word "fan"—being a sports fan or whatever,--is just an abbreviation for "fanatic." (*Laughter.*) You know, are we fanatical? Are we excited? I'm not talking about being irrational. But are we genuinely excited about the things of God, and putting all these other things, like the Pirates or the Steelers or whatever, into perspective?

Bruce: Amen. Good illustration. The word "fan" means fanatic. Are we fanatical about our faith, not in an improper way, or an abusive way, but just internally, do I have an excitement about the glorious and gracious salvation I understand as a result of the Fall? We need to be fanatical about that. Now the fanaticism will manifest itself in the quality of life that we live. That's what Peter is saying. It is demonstrated in the quality of life that you live. It helps you understand which things are prohibited by God, and which things are permissible by God, and I manage them with moderation, because I understand that it's something of His glory. Yes, please?

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Participant: How do you measure moderation? For example, Joel Osteen has a worth of \$40 million, as a preacher, and Rick Warren has a worth of \$14 million, and T. D. Jakes has a worth of \$18 million. Now, when I was a Muslim, I used to go to the mosque, (*unclear*), and the preacher, who lived inside the mosque, in a little hole, and he used to take in tools, and he used to take in clothes and he got thirty rupees(*unclear*.) Now here, in America, we are all rich. And I think that the preachers do deserve to have a good life. But Jesus said that you cannot have two masters. So money is one, and, if once we have it, money is the master, like Joel Osteen has, or Rick Warren has. Then we start compromising the value, because, if they speak anything against a secular life, they will lose their audience, and maybe their backing. So I think that the preachers themselves have to first follow what Jesus said. (*Unclear*.)

Bruce Amen to that!

Men: Amen!

Bruce: That's well said. It's an excellent illustration. Now, all I would say is that, how you determine moderation, I cannot do that for you. Only the Holy Spirit can do that for you. So I would say that I would need to go ask Joel Osteen that question. "How do you determine it?", because I can't do that for him. I have my own opinion of what that would be.

My responsibility is to live a life of moderation, and so your illustration is exactly right. We expect too much of the clergy, and the clergy expects too much of themselves. And so, we cannot have two masters.

I don't know why people ask me this, but several times, after I've made some presentation in the secular world, somebody will say, "Have you ever thought about running for Congress?" (*Laughter*.) And I say, "No." Christian people ask me that.

"Would you consider it?"

What's the answer?"

"No."

"Why wouldn't you do that?"

Well, my only answer is for me. I can't speak for anybody else. I don't want to confuse which kingdom I'm trying to build.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: The kingdom of this world, or the kingdom of God? So I'm not going to get involved in politics. Now that doesn't mean that somebody else shouldn't. All I'm saying, for me, that's the reason I'm not going to do that. Well, will I pray about it? No. The answer has already come. "Don't do it," because I don't want to confuse what I'm doing in building the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of this world.

Now that's just my own personal response. I think that's an individual response that we have to have through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, individually, as He works in our lives. Now that does not mean that Christians should not be involved in politics. Yes, we should. We need to be involved in politics, because it's part of our lives. We can influence society immensely by the way that we get involved. But all I'm saying is, at a personal level, that is not something I would choose to do, for that very reason. That's a

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question only you can answer yourselves, brothers, how you manage your lives with moderation.

But our brother has given us a great illustration of what, perceptibly, could be an abuse of that, because, do they really have two masters in their lives? You really can't do that. Anything else on moderation? Yes, please?

Participant: But is not self control the last of the fruit of the Spirit?

Bruce: Self control means to be sober-minded. It means calm and gentle and controlled in spirit. That's what self control means. Calm and collected in spirit is what it means to be self-controlled. Yes, Bob?

Bob: I'm just going to comment back to that politician thing. I think that politicians suffer from a lack of moderation, because they're so much about power, greed and grime.

Bruce: It does seem to be that way, doesn't it?

Bob: Abundantly.

Bruce: Now let me remind you of something, brothers. The application of what we're learning applies to whom first?

Men: Us.

Bruce: Ourselves! Before we start throwing bricks at somebody else's glass house, we need to do it to our own. Make the application in your own life before you start accusing somebody else of theirs. That's what Peter is telling us, because that's the implication. I bang myself over the head with the Scripture, not somebody else. You've got to do that for yourself. This is my responsibility, to take the truth.

Remember this. Learning should not stop at knowledge. Learning should lead to living. That's what Peter is teaching us. Learning should lead to living, and living should lead to loving. So don't have this knowledge be something that you do to throw to somebody else. Do it about yourself. Bill, you had your hand up.

Bill: I'm just commenting on the issue with regard to evangelistic preachers today. You know, this is nothing new.

Bruce: That's right.

Bill: Paul mentioned in a number of his epistles about those who were preaching for the wrong reasons. And his response, I think, is probably what ours should be, that God is glorified and the cross is preached, and he was happy about the situation. I think we should, you know, without throwing stones once again at those houses, we should spend more time praying that God's perfect Word would be so used through those efforts.

Bruce: God will use any amount of truth he wants to use to bring somebody to saving faith. It may not be the way that you and I would package it, but God will use it. And that's because He's sovereign, and I'm not. So it doesn't have to be done the way that I always want it to be done, or how I think it should be done. I just have to realize that God is using something for His glory, and people are coming to saving faith. I need to rejoice in that, even though it may not be the way that I would do it. The issue is God's sovereignty, not my evaluation of how it should be done. Good point.

There is one other thing we need to take a look at. We've seen the preparation, we've seen the purpose, and now we need to look at the pattern of a fixed mind, of being

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prepared. Our hope is fixed on the grace that will come to us. Go back to 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 13.

Being sober minded, that is the purpose. And then here is the pattern. "Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The sense of this verse is: Prepare your mind, being sober. Now, hope in grace.

It's interesting to trace the various expressions of hope in the New Testament. Let me give you some examples of hope.

Ephesians chapter 4, verse 4. It's the hope of your calling.

Ephesians chapter 1, verse 8. The hope of His calling you.

Colossians 1:23. The hope of the gospel. When you and I preach the gospel, there is hope.

1 Thessalonians 5:8. The hope of our salvation.

Titus chapter 1, verse 2. The hope of eternal life.

Now the word "hope, Biblically, friends, does not mean wishful thinking. We're not talking about that. We're not thinking about "I wish that would happen." We're talking about the confident expectation that it will occur. That's what the word "hope" means, confident expectation. So we have a confident expectation in His calling, of our calling, of the gospel, of our salvation, of eternal life, and, in Titus 1 verse 2, the hope of righteousness. There is the confident expectation of His righteousness being imputed to me, and therefore my life radically changes. And 1 Peter 1:3, the hope of the resurrection.

Now when you take a look at all of those things, all of these elements of hope are really about one word, aren't they? The word *grace*. All the hope is really about the grace of God. That's what Peter says in 1:13. "The grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." In other words, when you and I begin to think more about the revelation of Christ, we will begin to understand more about the doctrine of grace.

Peter sums it up in general terms. The one great object of all of our hopes is the grace to be given you when Christ is revealed.

Now let me tell you a little bit about what grace includes, things we need to focus on. Grace includes our calling. Grace includes the gospel. Grace includes the salvation we have. It includes eternal life. It includes our righteousness, and our resurrection at the return of the Lord Jesus.

All of the times you look up the word *hope*, it has its basis upon one simple word, and that is *grace*. That's why I asked Don to play "Amazing Grace" for us for our transition and introduction into God's presence today, because all the things we're talking about, the preparedness of our minds, the purpose of being sober-minded, and the pattern of focusing upon the return of the Lord Jesus in all of His glory, is all about grace. Brothers, it's all about amazing grace! That's what Peter has been telling us in verses 1-12. Your salvation is a twofold thing. It's about grace. It's about His glory.

And may it be so, that you and I will want to live the lifestyle of the saved, because we will put into practice the doctrine that we understand. May it be so, for Jesus' sake.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You for the logical construction of the Scripture, where You always give us a doctrine which is the standard before You, to instruct us on the

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practice and implications of the application of that standard. Remind us, Father, of our gracious and glorious salvation, so that we will prepare our minds for action. We'll be ready to move, if the Holy Spirit moves in us. And we'll become aggressive responders to what we see You doing, just as Jesus says in John five. "The Son can do nothing on His own initiative, but only does those things He sees the Father doing." Father, give us eyes and wisdom today, to see what You are doing around us, so that we will be prepared in mind to get up and move for action, ready to go. May we be sober-minded in our thinking patterns, removing those things that inebriate us, the allurements of this world. And Father, may we understand that the pattern of our lives is to focus upon the grace of the hope that is given us at the return of the Lord Jesus. And may it be so, for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen!"