

“A LIFE OF REVERENCE”

HOLINESS

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Bruce: Good morning, men!

Men: Good morning, Bruce!

Bruce: It's nice to be back with you. I'm too young to be feeling this old.

(Laughter.) We all have back problems. The bishop and I, and several others have back problems. I had a procedure last week, one of three. They're going to end up, probably in October, doing some laser surgery, so it's a step-by-step preparation for all the scar tissue.

It's kind of interesting. When they had me on my stomach, and were putting this needle in me to inject some steroids into my spinal column, I heard, “Oops!” *(Laughter.)*

And I was awake, and the doctor said, “Boy, you've got a bad back!”

And, while I was lying on my stomach, I said, “Could you interpret that for me, please?” *(Laughter.)*

He said, “You've got a lot more scar tissue than I thought,” and he was having a tough time pushing the needle into the scar tissue to get to the spinal cord, where he needed to put the injection.

So everything is fine. I would say that I've had about a 30 per cent decrease in pain. As long as I don't bend over, I'm okay. So, as long as I don't bend over, I'm pretty good. Let's open your Bibles, please, to 1 Peter.

Before we do that, men, one of you just brought something to my attention today, so I just think we need to have a moment of prayer. And I'm just going to ask you to do this silently, and go before the Lord as you would like, in your own spirit.

But, you know, we have Christian missionaries around the world who are being severely persecuted by ISIS. You know, it is a terrible thing that they're doing. They're taking families, and taking their children, asking them to deny Jesus, and when they don't, they exterminate them and cut their heads off. Now that's something that is going on in the body of Christ today. And, you know, we're a part of that family that's being impacted. We sit and complain about the weather, and yet their lives are at stake. And I just think that we ought to spend a couple of minutes quietly, individually, going before the Lord, and just saying, “Lord, intervene for the protection of Your body around the world,” because we are part of that family that is being persecuted. We haven't experienced it, but they are part of our family. And let's just go to a moment of prayer and quiet, and I'll close in a moment. *(Silent prayer.)*

Father, You are our Protector. You are our Lord, You are our Savior. You are our Father, and You are the Head of our family, the body of Christ. And Father, there are members of Your family who are being persecuted for Jesus' sake. Lord, we don't understand the whys and the how-comes and the why-fors of all of this, but we just pray that Your grace would be sufficient for them in their moment of trial. We pray, Lord, that You would protect them physically, emotionally and spiritually. We pray that You would be pleased to intervene and protect them. Father, give them the grace to know how to

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respond in a situation that is just untenable in our own minds. So, Father, intervene for Your glory. And we just pray this, that You would protect Your body worldwide, for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen!”

Men: Amen!

Bruce: Men, that's something we really need to do, to just support our friends and missionaries around the world. You know, we have such a great life here. What they are experiencing is beyond our comprehension. So let's just not forget our family members, who are really suffering for Jesus' sake.

Let's turn in your Bibles, please, to 1 Peter chapter 1, picking up at verse 17. “And if you call on Him as Father, who judges impartially, according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” May God be pleased to open our eyes, that we might behold wonderful things from His word. Amen.

One of the things that is so important about us understanding the concept that is known as expository preaching is that it always maintains the proper balance between doctrine and practice. We need to understand that doctrine always precedes practice. When you let the Scripture be the means by which you determine what you're going to say, expository preaching is much more than just verse by verse preaching. It's really the basis of why you say what you say. Why did you say this? Because the Scripture said it. That's basic expository preaching.

And so, as we come to this passage today, I want to make sure that you understand that there is always a great balance between the doctrine of the Scripture and the practical application.

Now, the last couple of weeks, we've been studying, in verses 15 and 16, “since it is written: “You shall be holy, for I am holy,”” and “if you call on Him as Father.” You'll notice that there is a statement.

Let me give you a quick review of what we've learned so far from the first chapter of 1 Peter, because I want you to understand this. He gives us some wonderful instruction on the doctrine of our gracious and glorious salvation, and then, after that, there is some application on how we're to live. We're going to talk today about how we live.

In verses 15 and 16, as a consequence of our understanding our gracious and glorious salvation, we are told to live a holy life. That's the application of the doctrine of our gracious and glorious salvation.

So here is a basic breakdown of our passage so far. In chapter 1, verses 2 and 3, we saw our gracious birth. In verses 3 and 4, we saw a living hope. Now this is all doctrine about our salvation. And then, in verse 5, we saw a powerful protection, and then, in verses 6-12, a great rejoicing. Verses 1-12 deal with God's grace in salvation, and then verses 13, 14, 15 and so on deal with and talk about how you live as a result of this

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gracious and glorious salvation. If you don't understand the doctrine of your salvation, you're going to have a tough time applying that in your life.

So Peter now takes us into another expression of this. Another way of looking at this would be that verses 1-12 is what goes with our salvation, and then verses 13-21 would be our response to our salvation. What goes with our salvation is 1-12, and 13-21 would be our response to our understanding the doctrine of our gracious and glorious salvation.

Now that is what you call expository teaching or preaching. You take the doctrine first, and then you talk about the application, and you always keep those things in balance. That's the beauty and the advantage of being an expository teacher or preacher.

Now today we want to see our response to the glorious and gracious salvation, which is twofold. First of all, in verses 14, 15, and 16, it's "be holy." Live a holy life. And now he gives another expression of how we are to apply our understanding of our salvation, and that is that we are to live a life of reverence; a life of holiness, and now a life of reverence. You pick that up in verse 17.

Notice verse 17. "And if you call on Him as Father, who judges impartially, according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile." We're talking about a life of reverence. When you understand, friends, the gracious and glorious salvation that God has given us in His grace, one of the responses for us should be not only a life of conduct that is holy, but also a life of reverence. We conduct ourselves as children of God, who have a heavenly Father who is gracious to us and has given us a gracious and glorious salvation. We respond to that with a life of reverence. Now that's what Peter is going to teach us today.

Now the two reasons why he says that you and I need to live lives of reverence, when we apply the doctrines of our gracious and glorious salvation, when you understand your salvation, as Peter is teaching it to us, men, one of the responses is that you're going to have a life of reverence, because you stand in awe of the salvation that you have just understood.

So there are two reasons why he says we should have a life of reverence, and the first one is this: the coming judgment, the coming judgment for the body of Christ. The second is our completed redemption. The coming judgment will be in verse 17, and the completed redemption will be in 18-21.

Let's take a look at this theory of coming judgment as a means of producing within us a life of reverence. The last two weeks we've been discussing the holiness of God, His awesome glory. Yet here, Peter says that the same One who is altogether holy—"be holy, for I am holy"—is also the same One that you and I can call Father.

Now just consider that for a moment. The One who is holy, the One who is absolutely righteous, is also the One that you and I have been given the privilege, because of our gracious and glorious salvation, to refer to Him as Father. The Holy One is also the Father. And so that's where we begin to develop the sense of reverence.

Notice verse 14. In verse 14 we see this. "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. But as the One who is holy has called you, be holy in all your conduct, since it is written: "Be holy, for I am holy.""

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Now here's the way this works out. When you and I call upon God as Father, it is to assume the position and perform the duties of an obedient child. When we say "Father," we're positioning ourselves to be obedient and reverent children. To keep on calling God as your Father is to assume the position and perform the duties of being an obedient child. Now reverse that around, also. Our calling Him Father, and being obedient children, is our answer to having been called His children. In other words, one feeds the other. When you call Him Father, that means you are obedient. You're saying, "He's my Father." Do you see how the two go together?

Now that's what he's saying. Not only is He the One who is holy, but He is the One you can also call Father. That all ties to verses 14 and 15, tying together the privileges that we have, being members of God's family, and calling Him Father.

Let me give you some insights into what the Scripture talks about the Fatherhood of God, as it relates to the body of Christ.

Psalms 68:5. "... a Father to the fatherless, a Defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling."

Isaiah chapter 64, verse 8. "Yet, O Lord, You are our Father. We are the clay, you are the Potter. We are all the work of Your hands."

Matthew chapter 6, verse 9. "This is how you should pray: Our Father, who art in heaven."

Matthew 7, verse 11. "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him."

And Romans 8:15. "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Now do you see the contrast? Peter is saying, "Look!" On one hand, God is holy, spotless, pure, righteous. That's the One whom you worship. But, at the same time, you have the privilege of calling that One who is holy, spotless, and glorious and awesome, you have the privilege of calling Him Father. That's who begins to create within us a spirit of worship and reverence for Him, because we understand that the Holy One is also our Father.

And that's why I was struck today to pray for the family of God worldwide, which is being persecuted, because He is the same Father to them as He is to us. We have the privilege of calling Him Father.

Now these family researchers tell us that there are two things in order for a person to have a well-based family. Two things are necessary for a well-adjusted childhood environment—first of all, a place to call home, and secondly, a relationship. That's what kids need, a place to call home, and a relationship. Turn with me to John chapter 14.

Many of you know my situation when I was in Viet Nam on my second tour, helping to build the orphanage. We had forty-one children in our orphanage. There was one young boy who was probably the most rotten human being I had ever met. He would just as soon slit your throat as look at you.

We found him in a garbage can when he was about nine years old. We understood that he had no living relatives. He had no family. He had no place.

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We brought him into the orphanage, and I was teaching him the Scripture when I wasn't flying missions. And they loved to read the Old Testament, all the Hezekiah's and the Jeremiah's and all those great words that we have trouble pronouncing. They loved to read them as I read it to them. One week was the Old Testament, and one was the New Testament.

I was reading this passage to this young boy. Now this is a young kid, you know, who had no living relative. We researched his family. His parents had been executed by the Viet Cong. He had no living relative. He had no place to live, and he lived in a garbage can, and we brought him into the orphanage.

We were reading and studying John 14, down to verse 18. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, He is the one who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love Him, and manifest Myself to him.”

Now Pastor Wyn was the pastor of the church, who was interpreting for me as I was teaching these Vietnamese children. They understood some English. But the little boy raised his hand and said, “What does that mean?”

And I was trying to describe, in my English way, what it meant that you are no longer an orphan. When Christ gives you a gracious and glorious salvation, you now have a place, and you have a relationship. And I was trying to explain that to him, and Pastor Wyn was translating that into the Vietnamese language.

And after a few minutes, this little boy, who had been the most rotten kid I had ever met in my life, tears began to come down his eyes. And then, he said, “Do you mean I can have a father?”

And I said, “Yes, you can have a Father.”

And he said, “I can have a place to live?”

And I said, “Yes, you can live here in the orphanage.”

A place, and a relationship. Now several days later, Pastor Wyn told me that he was praying with him about his salvation. And do you know the first word that came out of the boy's mouth? “Father!” (*Paraphrase.*) “I will not leave you as an orphan. I will be your Father.”

You see, God was pleased at that moment to grant that little boy saving faith. He was the one when I told you the latest story, the boy who wanted to give his life to save his friend. That was the little boy, because that little boy, who had no place, and he had no relationship, when he understood God's gracious and glorious salvation, his response was to say this. “Well, I've got a place now, and I've got a family and a relationship.” And later on, about a year later, he was the one who went with me to the hospital to save this little boy's life by giving blood.

You see, he understood this concept, the concept of a place and a relationship. That's the uniqueness of what Peter is telling us, that the same One who is holy is the One who is your Father. And that is what breeds and produces in us the spirit of reverence.

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How do we respond to the holy Father? How do we respond to the Fatherhood of God and the holiness of God? Peter says you do that with a life of reverence, as we’ll see in a moment.

Now, with this comes several privileges, remembering that the Holy One we call Father is also the One who will judge us each according to our deeds, impartially. No favorites; He doesn’t grade on a curve.

In the judgment of believers, He judges our works, not our salvation. Look at verse 18. Back to 1 Peter. “And if you call on Him as Father, who judges impartially, according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile.” In other words, you realize that God is going to be a holy judge, and that He doesn’t judge on a curve. He always judges on the same basis. He is judging our works, not our salvation. Remember this. When you trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior, you were justified by faith alone. That means that God gave you credit for His sinless perfection and His perfect obedience. You’re justified by faith. God has dealt with your sin. He is not judging your sin. That has been paid for by what?

Participant: Christ.

Bruce: By Christ at the cross. That’s paid for. That’s not what he is referring to. He is referring to your works, as a result of your gracious and glorious salvation. He’s not referring to your eternal judgment. That has already been secured because of the Person and work of Christ, when you were justified by faith alone. When you got credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ, your sins were dealt with—your sins in the past, your sins in the present, and your sins in the future. Do you understand that? You’ve been covered in the blood of Christ. That’s what Peter is saying.

And that’s why you and I ought to have a response of reverence when we understand the concept that the Holy One is the Father who judges impartially. One of the things that motivates us is to realize that my works, my response to the Fatherhood of God and the holiness of God is going to be evaluated impartially by God the Father when I take up my residence with Him. He’s going to evaluate that. He doesn’t judge on a curve. He does it impartially. That ought to be a motivation for us to live a life of reverence.

When we trusted Christ, God forgave our sins, and declared us righteous in His sight. Our sins are already judged at the cross, and therefore cannot be held against us. You’re justified by faith alone, given credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ.

Now we call that a family judgment—a loving, holy Father dealing with His children. The word *judge* literally means this: to find something that is good. Our purpose is to glorify Him. Here is how Paul writes about it in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 5. “It is the LORD who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time. Wait till the LORD comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness, and will expose all the motives of men’s hearts. At that time, each will receive his praise from God.”

Now do you understand the difference? This is a judgment of our works, and our response to God being our Father. This is not about your salvation. That has been covered because of the blood of Christ. You are secure in Christ, if you have trusted Christ. That’s what Peter is saying about our gracious and glorious salvation. It’s of

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grace. Now He is going to evaluate our obedience, and our response to the holiness of God, and to His Fatherhood in our lives.

That’s why Peter is saying this. Look, if you understand all this, if you understand this doctrine, if you understand your gracious and glorious salvation, the way you respond is this. You’re going to have a life of reverence, because you just stand in awe of what you understand doctrinally. In my gracious and glorious salvation, I’ve been covered in the blood of Christ. My sins are forgiven. When you understand that, that produces a certain kind of response—not flippancy, but a response of reverence!

Notice how he says it here in verse 17. “As you call on Him as Father, who judges impartially, according to one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear.” That’s the word *reverence*. You do it with a sense of awe, a sense of reverence.

While we receive many privileges, one of the privileges we don’t have is the right to be disobedient. You have all kinds of privileges, all kinds of responsibilities, but one of the responsibilities we do not have is the responsibility to be disobedient. The Father is also the holy Judge, and, as such, he never pampers or excuses or indulges our disobedience. He accepts no bribes. In other words, you can’t say, “Well, look at how many Scriptures I know. I teach Sunday school. I have perfect church attendance. I’m a tither.” You can’t say all those things. That’s what he’s saying

It’s about the intention of your hearts, men. How do we live our lives at work, with our families, driving down, playing golf, wherever we are? Do you have a sense of reverence for life, because you understand your gracious and glorious salvation?

He does not show favoritism. Romans chapter 2, verse 11. He accepts no bribes. Deuteronomy chapter 10, verse 17.

Now years of obedience do not permit one act of disobedience. The word *work* here, in verse 17, is talking about the whole tenor of your life, not individual aspects like this or that, what I did on Monday or Tuesday. The word *work* is a collective word which means “the tenor of your life.” What is the direction of my life? What is the total composite of my life? Is it a life of reverence in everything I do? You can’t isolate it and say, “I’m reverential on Sunday, but I’m not on Saturday when I go and do something else.” He’s talking about the whole tenor of your life. He’s going to evaluate everything, and that’s the whole package. In other words, what is the direction of my life? It is my intention, in everything I do, to do it with reverence for God. It’s a summary. Life is a living whole, the main drift and basis of what one does.

Now let me give you some illustrations of what the great work is that we’re to do. The disciples asked Jesus one day, in John chapter 6, verse 28, “What must we do to do the works that God requires?” And Jesus’ answer was this. “The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent.” That’s our great work, to believe in the One He has sent.

The word *believe* means what?

Participant: DART.

Bruce: DART. What does DART mean? Depend upon, adhere to, rely upon, and trust in. Now the word *believe* is a very, very aggressive, active word in the original language of the Scripture. It is not something that is very passive, like in our English vocabulary. It’s very, very aggressive. You depend upon Christ in everything you do.

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That’s how you live a life of reverence. You adhere to Christ in everything that you do. That’s how you live a life of reverence. You rely upon Christ in everything that you do. That’s how you live a life of reverence. And you trust in Christ, because that’s how you live a life of reverence.

You see, Jesus is saying this. The great work that you do—yes, you do all these other things. You teach Bible studies on Friday. You witness for Christ. You tithe. You go to church. You lead bible studies. You do all these other things. But the great work that I want you to do is to believe! I want you to depend upon Me. I want you to adhere to Me. I want you to rely upon Me. I want you to trust in Me. And when you do that, you see, that flows out of a basis for a life of reverence. You can’t act like that and not be reverential. You can’t be flippant about that when you go into a meeting and say, “I’ve got to DART. I’ve got to trust Christ, and depend upon Him as I go into this meeting.” That’s a life of reverence. And Jesus is saying this to His disciples. (*Paraphrase.*) “The great work that I give you to do is the great work of the gospel, that is, to believe on the One whom He has sent—to depend upon, adhere to, rely upon and trust in.” That’s how we begin to live a life of reverence.

Now when we view God’s former grace to us in His salvation, and now our impending evaluation of our work, the totality of our lives, that ought to move us to a sense of reverence. Now this is not in a sense of fear. It’s a godly fear. It’s a reverential fear. It’s a means of understanding how I stand in awe of Him. It’s not in the sense of a master/slave relationship, but the expression of a father/son relationship. It’s not the fear of judgment, but the fear of disappointing the One who loves you so much. That’s what it means. And so, to do this with fear, to do this with reverence, means that I just don’t want to disappoint the One who loves me so much.

And how do I know He loves me so much? Because I understand my gracious and glorious salvation. That’s why doctrine precedes practice. You cannot live a reverential life until you understand the glorious and gracious salvation that God gave you. And when you do that, you have a sense that I just don’t want to disappoint the One who loves me so much, because He sacrificed His life for me. That’s the fear that generates a spirit of reverence, and a life of reverential living. And you do that because you are trusting in the Person and work of Christ. It’s the fear of sinning, and making a mockery of His love. I call Him “Father,” and then I choose to sin? I’ve just made a mockery of His salvation. You see, that’s what it is. I just don’t want to do that. I don’t want to disappoint the One I love.

Realizing that our home is really in heaven, and that we are really strangers here on earth, we conduct ourselves with reverence before the holy God, the One whom we call Father. We do it out of respect.

You see, it has to do with the intention of how you choose to make your decisions. It has to do with the intention of your heart. Do I want to do everything I do out of reverence and respect for my Father, who I can call Father, who is also the Holy One, who I know is going to evaluate the whole quality of my life? I just don’t want to do those things that are disappointing to Him.

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You know how it is, brothers. Be honest. When you choose to sin, and you're in Christ, how do you feel? You just feel like dirt. Yuk! There's just this sense that overcomes you. What is that? It's the realization that you have chosen to violate the love of the Father who loves you so much, and has given you a gracious and glorious salvation. That's what produces reverence in us.

You see, that's why it's so important to pray a simple prayer like, “Lord, keep my sin ever before me.” It's so important, because until I realize that the choices that I'm making are sinful, that's the only way I'll ever know that I'm offending my Father who loves me so much. Father, keep my sin ever before me. Two prayers that I always say to myself every day are these. “Lord, have mercy on me, the sinner,” because when I start thinking of that, it helps me live a life of respect, a sense of reverence and awe for a holy God, who I can call Father. Do you understand the significance of being able to call Him Father? It's the One who is holy, but we can call Him Father.

Do you respect your heavenly Father at work, at home, at play? Now I can't tell you how to do that. All I'm saying is that an attitude of the heart is so grateful because of the gracious and glorious salvation that Peter has just described for us, and your response is to live a holy life, and that holy life is manifested by a life of reverence, respect and awe for who God is.

So what is our response to God being our Father? It's a life of reverence, a life of respect.

How do we worship, folks? Now I don't mean to get on a soapbox here. But is our worship respectful? Is our worship reverential? Or do we orient it just to make sure that people will get a blessing? Now I can't tell you how to do that. All I'm saying is that you've got to look at the attitude of your heart. Do you realize, men, that you and I are responsible for our own worship? It's not the teams of musicians up front who set it up. You and I are responsible for our own worship. And that is based upon our understanding of our gracious and glorious salvation. I go into the worship service with a sense of reverence. I go into the worship service with a sense of awe! I go into the worship service with a sense of respect and dignity, because I understand this. The One who is holy is also the One that I can call Father. Now I want to go and worship Him, and give Him His due respect and His reverence because of who He is. That's what Peter is telling us. There is a sense of reverence that comes as a result of understanding the doctrine of your salvation. And then it translates into every aspect of our lives.

So the first reason that we have a life of reverence is because of the coming judgment. We know that our Father will judge our whole life impartially, the quality, bearing and direction of your life. He will judge that. And He will look for things that are good.

Now give me a little bit of license. It's something like this. When you stand before Him, He's going to run a motion picture of your life, and you're going to say, “Well, what about that time that I really did that thing?”

“Well, you had your own motive. Your motive wasn't clear. It was about you and not about me.”

“Well, how about that? You mean that one showed up? I really felt bad that day. I was sick.”

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“Yes. That really pleased me, because you were trusting me more than yourself, because you were so weak in your physical condition. You didn’t think you could do well, and you really had to Dart. You really had to trust in Me more.”

That will show up more than the one where you think that you did it well yourself. You see, He is going to evaluate the whole tenor of your life. And it’s a life that is characterized by reverence, respect and awe. That’s only going to come, brothers, if you understand your salvation. Doctrine precedes practice. Do you see that? Verses 1-12 are critical before we go to verses 13-21.

But there is a second reason, not only our coming judgment. The second reason is our completed redemption. The second thing that produces a life of reverence is the recognition of the preciousness of the price of the ransom paid for us at the cross, a completed redemption. Redemption means rescue through the payment of a price. We were rescued through the payment of a price. And when you understand that completed redemption, that will produce within us an attitude and a spirit and a demeanor of reverence.

“Conduct yourselves with fear, because you know.” Essentially that’s what it’s saying. Conduct yourselves with fear and reverence, because you know the price that was paid for your redemption.

Earthly captives in Jesus’ time were ransomed by the payment of money, because that was the only thing that was valuable to the culture at the time. So if you wanted to get somebody to ransom them, to redeem them, you had to buy them with a certain amount of money.

Notice this, that no corrupt ransom can save a corrupt life. Our ransom was accomplished by the blood of Christ.

Now do you see how pondering the shed blood of Christ produces a reverential spirit? When we consider such a holy, mysterious, devoted love, His coming from such a height and going to such a depth below, a sense of awe is awakened.

We think of being free. That brings about a certain response within us. Let me give you some illustrations here that evoke joy. I want to spend the rest of the time talking about the blood of Christ, if I may.

The more a person believes and loves and rejoices in the love of God, the more he is unwilling to displease Him. The more that you and I stand in awe, and rejoice in the love of God, the less are we likely to displease Him.

Peter says that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Now notice what he didn’t say. Now let’s go back to our passage.

“... knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.”

Now notice what he doesn’t say. He didn’t say, “Christ died for you.” We know He did, but He doesn’t say that. He’s emphasizing the sacrifice and the substitutionary work of Christ on our behalf. Anybody would die for somebody, but only a holy God could shed His blood. The Scripture says this: “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” It’s the cost of our redemption that produces reverence and life

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within us. When you understand that you’ve been washed in the blood of Christ, that will produce reverence in you.

The value of anything is dependent upon its usefulness in times of trial. Now notice this. If you were lost in a desert, and you had ten million dollars in your wallet, you wouldn’t think it was very precious. What would be the most precious thing for you?

Men: Water.

Bruce: A cup of water. You see, that’s what Peter is saying. How precious it would be to have a cup of water!

The blood of Christ is precious in so many ways to the believer because of what God accomplished in the shed blood of Christ. Now let me give you just a litany of things. If you want this, I’ll type this up and have it on the Internet, or on our web page. But just listen to it. Just relax, and just think about this. Here is the power of the blood of Christ, and why it is so precious, brothers! You’re redeemed by the blood of Christ. He doesn’t say, “He died for you.” Somebody else may sacrifice his life, but He did more than that. He shed His blood for you, that you might be wrapped in the robes of Christ’s righteousness.

Here is just a litany of the power of the blood of Christ. Number 1. It’s an atoning power Leviticus 17:11, because it produces a reconciled relationship. The blood of Christ accomplishes a reconciled relationship. You have been reconciled to God because of the blood of Christ.

Number 2. It’s a redeeming power. Ephesians 1:7. It’s a removal of all the bondage to all of sin and Satan. It’s a redeeming power. You’ve been rescued by the payment of a price.

Number 3. It’s a justifying power. Romans 5:9. Your guilty position as an unrighteous person has been justified. You’ve been given credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ because of the blood of Christ. The ransom that has been paid for you produces within us a spirit of reverence.

Number 4. It’s a forgiving power. Matthew 26:28. He forgives our treason against God’s holiness and His creative ordinance. You’ve been forgiven because of the blood of Christ.

Number 5. It’s a propitiating power. In other words, it removes God’s wrath. The reason that you and I do not experience God’s wrath is because of the blood of Christ. Romans chapter 9, verse 25.

Number 6. It’s also a purifying power. Revelation chapter 1, verse 5. We are dressed in Christ’s righteousness. God views you as being wrapped in the robes of righteousness, and so it is a purifying power. God views you as being pure now, because of the blood of Christ. It’s not because of what you do. It’s because of what Christ did for you, in your gracious and glorious salvation.

You see, brothers, when you ponder this completed redemption, it ought to generate within us a spirit of reverential fear and awe, and the magnificent respect we have for a holy God.

Number 6. So it’s also a pacifying power. Colossians 1:20. It is the blood of Christ that made peace for us with God. It’s not your making a decision. It was the shed blood

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of Christ that made peace possible. Romans chapter 5, verse 1. We have peace with God because of the redeeming work of Christ.

Number 7. It's also a cleansing power. 1 John 1:7. It purifies us from all sin. What prevents you from wanting to sin again? It's the blood of Christ, because you have a completed redemption. You've been rescued through the payment of a price, and it impacts you in so many different ways.

Number 8. It's a sanctifying power that sets you apart for holiness. Hebrews chapter 9, verses 13 and 14.

Number 9. It's a purchasing power. He purchased the church of God, the body of Christ. Acts 20, verse 28. The reason we can pray for the family of God around the world is because of the shed blood of Christ, because God purchased His people to form His church. That is the result of the shed blood of Christ.

Number 10. It's a confirming power. The Holy Spirit testifies to us that we are His children. 1 John 5:6.

Number 11. It's a preserving power. Exodus 12, verse 7. It prevents the destroyer, the evil one, from attacking us. It's a preserving power. Satan cannot get to us because of what? Your obedience? No, it's because of the shed blood of Christ. You're protected by that. It's a preserving power.

Number 12. It's an overcoming power. Revelation 12:11. We have overcome. The victory over Satan has already occurred because of the shed blood of Christ.

Number 13. It's an invigorating power. John 6:53-55, because it's a source of life and satisfaction. It's very invigorating. When you can understand your completed redemption, men, there is a sense of invigoration that stimulates in your lives an activity, because you want to express your gratitude to the One who has loved you so much.

Number 14. It's a giving power. You've been given entrance into the presence of God. Hebrews chapter 9, verse 11.

Number 15. It's a covenanting power. It's a new arrangement. God has made a new arrangement because of the blood of Christ. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 24.

Number 16. and lastly, it's a remembering power. 1 Corinthians 10:16. We remember His shed blood.

You see, we just need to understand two things to have a life of reverence—His coming judgment, and a completed redemption. So that's what Peter means in verse 21. (*Paraphrase.*) “So through Him, you believe in me.” He has accomplished your salvation. He has called us into salvation. He has applied it, and in Him we now believe. Our life in Christ starts with God and brings us to God.

So why is it that you and I have been positioned, men, to live lives of respect and reverence and awe? Because of two things. The coming judgment, where you know God is going to evaluate you as a family member, because you have the privilege of calling Him Father.

How do you respond in your life choices, because you understand that Fatherly relationship? Do you understand the magnificence of God's love? You see, when you understand the Fatherhood of God, you understand the magnificence of His love for you in that gracious and glorious salvation that we read about in verses 1-12. And when you

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understand that, that begins to transform the conduct, the way you make your decisions, because you understand that God loves you so much that you can actually call Him Father. I have a place! I have a relationship! I have all that the psychologists and the psychiatrists say are necessary for a well-based life. And that is this: I’ve got a place and a relationship. My place is in the family of God, and I can call Him Father.

And secondly, do you understand the significance of your completed redemption? You’ve been rescued; you’ve been ransomed through the payment of a price. That price was the shed blood of Christ. Just look at those sixteen things I gave you that the Scripture teaches us about the power of the blood. There is power in the blood. And when you consider your completed redemption, men, it’s going to produce within us a sense of reverence, a sense of awe! You don’t take God flippantly or lightly. I realize that I can call Him Father. I understand this, also. I understand what it cost Him to put me in that position where I can call Him Father. That’s our completed redemption.

And the response, Peter says, is this. You have a life of fearing God—a life of reverence, respect and dignity, because you can call Him Father,

Let us pray. Father, this is such a magnificent concept. Forgive me for my ineptitude in trying to teach it clearly. I just pray, Lord, that You would remove anything that is not consistent with Your revealed will, consistent with Your character, Your nature, or Your attributes, and that only those things that are consistent with that which You want us to believe, and that we remember. Father, thank You that we can call You “Father.” And when we call You “Father,” do not ever let us take that for granted. That is not a flippant response. It’s a love response. It’s a love response, in obedience. But may our lives of reverence be manifested by our aggressive response to be obedient. The rights we have in calling you “Father,” as we are members of the family, for we do not have the right to be disobedient. And, Father, keep our sin ever before us, because we know that it has already been paid for. And may that response be that we would live lives of respect, dignity and awe in Your presence, for Jesus’ sake.

And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.”