

How To Live in a Pandemic 1 Peter 1:13-25

Peter, a once, hope-depleted but now hope-filled man is writing to a hope-deprived people who are scattered throughout the Roman empire.

He has assured them they are “elect exiles” by

- God’s foreknowledge. 2
- the Spirit’s sanctification. 2
- learning obedience to Jesus. 2
- cleansing from sin. 2

In other words, God has a purpose and plan for their isolation.

While that is being worked out, they should remember that they:

- Are born again to a living hope. 3
- Have an imperishable, undefiled, unfading inheritance kept in heaven. 4
- Are guarded by God’s power. 5

This changes the way they react to their circumstances. We...

- Rejoice 6
 - The trial is for a little while 6b
 - The genuineness of their faith is being tested to be proven more precious than gold. 7a
 - They will receive praise and glory and honor when Jesus returns 7b
- Love Jesus. 8a
- Believe Jesus 8b
- Obtain the outcome of their faith, salvation 9

10-12 - The prophets before them served them without complete answers. They predicted the ‘sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories’ which is the scriptural pattern for life.

Because you know these things to be true, this is how you live –

Therefore, preparing your minds for action,^[b] and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” ¹⁷And 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, ¹⁸knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you ²¹who 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. ²²Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ²⁴for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, ²⁵but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

a) *Prepare your minds for action.* 13

“to gird up” = Bind your loose-fitting garments around you

The Hebrew mind is the place for ‘understanding, feeling and desiring’

What we think determines everything. The battle for life is in the mind.

- What do you think about Jesus?
- What do you think about the Bible?
- What do you think about the purpose of salvation?
- What do you think about suffering?

These and other thoughts determine your emotions and your reactions to life.

This is why Peter calls us to be –

b) *Be sober-minded.* 13

Sober = calm, temperate, dispassionate – Choose God’s reality!

c) *Set your hope full on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* 13

It’s so important that this ‘grass’ time (24) doesn’t consume our horizon.

Amazingly, the Bible teaches us that the ultimate and final day will be brighter for all the darkness we may endure. And it is to that ‘sun’ we look –

Malachi 4:2 – *But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.*

d) *Live obediently.* 14

Rather than focusing on what we can’t do, let’s ask ourselves, “How can we exercise obedience to Jesus during this time?”

What disciplines are we enjoying? What people are we encouraging?

e) *Refuse to be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.* 14

Crisis press us into our old lives; old ways of thinking and behaving. We begin to live naturally rather than supernaturally. Instead,

Romans 12:2 - *be transformed by the renewal of your mind,*

ILL – Our old way of thinking is to hoard toilet paper and now, meat. But what does hoarding look like if we love our neighbor as ourselves?

f) *Be holy as / God is holy.* 15-16

The character of God is our model for life

'*qodesh*' = apartness, otherness, transcendent, uniqueness

g) *Call on God as Father.* 17

No pandemic increase the distance between you and God. There is no such thing as isolation from fellowship with the God who heals lepers, walks through walls and out of tombs. If anything, exile increases the joy of Jesus.

Pandemics purify our 'to-do' lists.

h) *Conduct yourself with fear* (of God). 17

i) *Don't live futile lives.* 18

Futile = perishable, vain / There is a contrast with v 25 & the eternal Word of God

Would you invest time, energy, money, etc., into anything you know will fail? No.

Time is the best test of truth and eternity will reveal that God is truth/true

Colossians 3:2 - *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

How does looking at life from an eternal perspective change the way we live now?

All eschatology is ethical –

1 John 3:2-3 - *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

j) *Live worthy the blood of Jesus. 19*

Let's measure our devotion by the degree of his sacrifice -

Romans 5:7-9 - *For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

18-19 remind us of Israel wanting to return to Egypt. Don't live like an Egyptian!

Here is the pattern again: v 20 – *Foreknown and manifest*. God has foreknown your suffering and will manifest its rationale/benefits in time

k) *Keep your faith and hope in God. 21*

It is far too easy to do otherwise. As Peter teaches us, it is hard work to keep your eyes on Jesus in the midst of a storm (Matt 14:30).

But Jesus is our model –

Hebrews 12:2 - looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,

- *who for the joy that was set before him*
- *endured the cross,*
- *despising the shame,*
- *and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God*

We must also keep our joy before us by faith and hope in God.

l) *Purify your souls by obedience. 22*

Hebrews 12:1b - let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us

Suffering teaches us many things and one of them is to travel light. It streamlines our spirituality by teaching us what is important and imperative.

m) *Love one another with a pure heart. 22*

v 23 - All of this will transpire, *“since you have been born again.... through the living and abiding word of God...”*

The previous imperatives (13-22) are dependent on the indicative of being born again by the Word of God.

Doctrine determines our destiny. It also determines our behavior.

- It is God’s word that changes you 22-23
- People will fall like grass, but God’s word remains forever 24-25a

v 25b - *And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

This word is ‘good news’ in a world of ‘faulty and bad news.’ 25b

Nothing has changed in heaven. It was good news when it was preached to you and it is still good news.

You know that not all the news is good news. But then again, that depends on your source of news. If your source of news is right, your world will be well.

Conclusion:

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. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” ¹⁷And 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, ¹⁸knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of

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And that is how you live in a pandemic!