

I PETER

Out Of Darkness Into Light

February 03, 2013

- I. Be Holy In All Your Behavior With A Holiness Like God's Holiness
 - A. **I Peter 2:9b-12** . . . But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; [10] for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. [11] Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. [12] Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.
 - B. Today, I want to present three important truths from **verses 9 and 10**. The **first** truth has to do with the importance of understanding what we have been saved from. The **second** truth deals with the importance of understanding what we are being saved to. And the **third** truth points to the stark contrast between the pre and post salvation experience.
 - C. Pray
- II. The Importance of Knowing What We Have Been Saved From
 - A. In the last half of verse 9, Peter says that we have been called us out of darkness into God's marvelous light.
 1. In **Colossians 1:13**, the apostle Paul says: "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son," which is essentially the same as what Peter said.
 2. These two statements (**Colossians 1:13** and **I Peter 1:9**) are often quoted in Christian circles because they profoundly important truths. And the reason they are profoundly significant is because they point to three important truths: (1) what God has so graciously saved us from, (2) what He is saving us to, and (3) the stark contrast between the "from" and the "to".
 - B. Now you may think you already know what God has saved you from. But if your basic understanding of salvation is that of being saved from eternal damnation in hell in order to live with God in heaven for ever, then you do not yet know the extent of what you have been saved from, or just how helpless you were when lost in your sin, or how desperately

you needed a savior, or the extent to which you needed God's mercy and forgiveness.

1. So why is knowing all this so important? Because if you do not know the evil of what you have been saved from, then it is probable you have a selfish love for God and only a minimal understanding of what God saved you to, which commonly means you are not all that motivated to live your new Christian life in stark contrast to your old sinful life.
2. To help you see the truth of what I just said, I want you to turn in your Bible with me to **Luke 7:40-47** . . . And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." [41] "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. [42] **When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?**" [43] Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And [Jesus] said to him, "You have judged correctly." [44] Turning toward the woman, [Jesus] said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. [45] You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. [46] You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. [47] For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but **he who is forgiven little, loves little.**"
3. In our unsaved condition, we are all in the same situation: rebels against God, willfully disobedient to the truth we know, utterly foolish in that we have sold ourselves into slavery to sin, choosing to live in darkness because we prefer that to God's light, and ruled by our flesh, our passions, our fears, and our selfish aspirations, rather than truth and reason.
 - a. The reality is, without Christ, we are so lost that the best we can do to improve our situation is to dress up our selfishness by making it more mannerly or socially acceptable.
 - b. True, we can increase our wealth so life will be more pleasant. We can gain more power so to have a sense of control. We can seek fame in order to satisfy our longing to be loved and accepted. Yet no matter how much we improve our unsaved condition, we are still willful rebels against God who are utterly lost in darkness.

4. Now you may be like Simon and think you do not need to be forgiven for very much because you see yourself as having been, and maybe still being, a pretty good person. But such thinking is not only self-deceptive, it stands opposed to what God wants you to value and choose, and the spiritual progress He wants you to make.
 - a. It is for this reason that Jesus said: “He who is forgiven much, loves much, but he who is forgiven little loves little.”
 - b. Jesus point is not that some need a huge amount of forgiveness while others need only a minor amount. What Jesus is saying is that some humbly and honestly realize they need a lot of forgiveness while others – possibly out of pride, or denial of reality, or self-deception – think they need only a minor amount of forgiveness.
 - c. And it is at this very place of either having or lacking a reasonably accurate understanding of what we are being saved from that we either move forward with a strong, life changing love for God, or we continue on in pride and smug condemnation of others who deem worse than us – like the Pharisee in Jesus’ parable who thanked God he wasn’t like the nearby sinner.
5. This brings us back to why it so important to have a reasonably accurate understanding of what you have been saved from.
 - a. The greater your understanding of what you have been saved from, the more you will have a true, heartfelt humility toward your past condition as a rebel against God, and your present condition as a Christian.
 - b. The greater your understanding of what you have been saved from, the more you will have a broken and contrite heart over your own sin – past and present.
 - c. The greater your understanding of what you have been saved from, the more you will know and fear what sin does to you, your character, your relationships, your physical health, your spiritual health, and your relationship with God.
 - d. The greater your understanding of what you have been saved from, the more you will hate sin and love righteousness, and the more you will hate the devil, the world, and your own sinful flesh, and love God.
6. This knowing that we have been forgiven much so that we love our Savior much is a vital reason it is important for us to have a clear and honest understanding of the darkness which we have been saved from.

III. The Importance of Knowing What We Are Being Saved To.

- A. This brings us to the second truth I said I wanted to talk about today. And this truth builds on the first truth. In other words, the better we understand what we have been saved from, the clearer and more dearly we treasure what we are being saved to. And though some of you may have a good understanding of what you are being saved to, I still want to look at it a bit closer for all of our sakes.
1. Peter says we have been saved out of darkness into God's marvelous light. Paul said we have been saved from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of God's beloved son. Jesus said we have been saved from death to life, and an abundant life at that.
 2. These are statements of stark contrast, and it is this stark contrast that can help us see and properly value what God is saving us to.
 - a. Consider: We were once in the kingdom of Satan – a ruler who is ruled by self-love, pride, and hatred of God. Satan only cares about reeling us in so he can keep us from eternal fellowship with God. As born again ones, we have entered the kingdom of God – a ruler who is love itself, who is merciful and gracious, forgiving and kind, who is just and righteous in all His ways, and who wants to free us from the clutches of Satan and bring us into true life – a life which He gained for us through the sacrifice of His only Son. Therefore, from an evil devil to a loving, good God – this is what we are being saved to.
 - b. Consider: sin always and in varied ways destroys, while righteousness always and in varied ways brings life, love, godly character, physical health, loving relationships, provision of our needs, protection from harm, and open, intimate, fellowship with God. Therefore, from a life of self-imposed hardships and unhappiness to a life of joy, contentment, and peace, even in the midst of trials – this is what we are being saved to.
 - c. And I could go on, but words are inadequate to provide a worthy description of what we are being saved to. Therefore, I will quote Paul's words from **I Corinthians 2:9** . . . “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
 3. This second truth – having a reasonably accurate understanding of what we are being saved to – certainly includes loving deeply the One who saved us. But it also leads to knowing that God is the ultimate treasure – a treasure of such worth that we will gladly sell all, including denying self, to obtain it.

- a. And when you love and treasure God this way, it leads to pursuing growth in godliness and standing strong against your fleshly desires and the devil's temptations.
 - b. When you love and treasure God this way, it leads to longing for and praying about and working toward being holy in all your behavior, just as God is holy.
 - c. When you love and treasure God this way, it leads to wanting nothing more than to be faithful to Him and please Him in your daily life.
 - d. And when you love and treasure God like this, it motivates you to persevere to the end.
4. The Bible teaches that righteousness has great reward, in this life and in the next – which is one of the primary reasons Jesus calls the Christian life the “abundant life.”
 5. What is my point? We gain great motivation toward obeying God and living according to His will when we grasp what it is we are being saved to.
 - a. It was Jesus experience with Simon, and it is my experience as well, that those who see themselves as pretty good people wisely desiring heaven over hell, show how lack of honesty and humility toward what they have been saved from and to by their lack of desire for a serious-minded, life-altering godliness that is in sharp contrast to their old life.
 - b. Does your understanding of what you have been saved from and your vision of what you are being saved to compel you to no longer live for yourself, but for Him who died and rose again on your behalf?

IV. The Stark Contrast Between What We Are Saved From and What We Are Saved To.

- A. Peter makes three statements that point to the stark contrast between what we have been saved from and what we are being saved to. These three statements are: **(1)** called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, **(2)** you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God, and **(3)** you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
- B. The contrast between our old life of unbelief and our new life of faith is not painted this stark by accident. The starkness is real, and we are wise to see it for what it is. With these three statements in mind, I want to show you some of the other statements in scripture that point to a stark contrast between what we were and what we are.

1. We have turned from darkness to light, and from the dominion or the rule of Satan to God (**Acts 26:18**).
2. We have gone from walking in darkness to walking in the Light (**Isaiah 9:2; John 8:12**).
3. We have gone from not comprehending the light and distrusting it to comprehending it and believing in it (**John 1:5, 12:46**).
4. We have gone from calling evil good and good evil to calling God good and evil devilish (**Isaiah 5:20**).
5. We have gone from being blind and following the blind to gaining sight and living as those who see (**Matthew 15:14**).
6. We have gone from willfully serving sin, which results in death, to willfully serving righteousness, resulting in sanctification, and whose outcome is eternal life (**Romans 6:16, 22-23**).
7. We have been freed from enslavement to sin so we can become slaves of God and His righteousness (**Romans 6**).
8. We have gone from knowing the right thing to do and not doing it, to knowing the right thing to do and doing it (**James 3:17**).
9. We have gone from lawlessness, which is open rebellion against God, to lawfulness, which is open submission and obedience to God (**I John 3:5**).
10. We have gone from the practice of sin and not knowing God to knowing God and the practice of righteousness (**I John 3:6-10**).
11. We have gone from selfishness and not knowing God to knowing God and a life ruled by love (**I John 4:7-8**).
12. We have gone from not loving God and willfully disregarding His commandments to loving God and cheerfully keeping His commandments (**John 14:23-24; I John 5:3**).
13. We have gone from hating our brother because we are walking in darkness to loving our brother because we are walking in the light (**I John 2:5**).
14. And we have gone from loving the world and the things that are in the world to loving God and the things of God (**I John 2:15-17**).

- C. Do you see the stark contrast between what we were and, by God's grace and the loving sacrifice of His son, what we have become?
1. Do you see not only the stark contrast but also the either/or reality of each of the statements from God's word?
 2. And if you see the either/or reality, do you see why going from darkness to the light starts with whole-hearted repentance, rather

than trying to bargain with God as if we could get Him to approve a partial move?

3. The primary point of this third truth is that when it comes to being born again, to being Christians, to being the church, to being the people of God, we cannot be a partial people in either direction. We cannot partially belong to the world and the devil and partially belong to God. We are either **all in** or **all out** – at least in our heart and will.
 - a. Jesus makes this principle clear when he says: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (**Matthew 6:24**).
 - b. Now we may still be working at being **ALL IN** by continuing to put known sin and selfish ways out of our lives. And we may still sin on occasion. But we are persistently and zealously continuing this cleansing and purifying process **precisely because** we have decided to be **ALL IN**.

V. In Summary

- A. Knowing more fully what we have been saved from and are being saved to, and making the firm decision to be **ALL IN**, as individuals, is vital to our individual spiritual health and growth.
- B. But to know this as a church, that is, as a community of believers, is vital to the spiritual health of the church and the testimony of the church in the community and on into the larger sphere of the world.
- C. May we, as God’s people, firmly hold these truths. And may we promote them within our group and among Christians wherever we meet them. For to fall short on this as individual Christians is a true loss for us individually and for God. But to fall short on this as a group of Christians is a huge loss for the church, the honor of God, and the cause of Christ in our world.