

Be Like Your Father

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[0:00] My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you today. If you are new or visiting with us, welcome.

We're glad that you're here. And we're glad that you're here not because we are trying to fill seats, but because we are following Jesus together as one community. And as we follow Jesus together, we've become convinced that there's no one so good that they don't need God's grace and His forgiveness, and no one so bad that they can't have it.

Which is why we come back week after week to look at God's Word together, because we believe that God, in His Word, has something to say to everyone. If you've been with us, you know we're in the book of 1 Peter, and the book of 1 Peter is a letter.

It's a letter written by a man named Peter, and he writes it to Christians who are living in modern-day Turkey in the first century. And these Christians are struggling, and so Peter writes to them because they're feeling out of place in the world because they're Christians.

And they're also facing opposition from the world because they're Christians. And Peter writes to instruct them and to encourage them. He's encouraging them that Jesus is worth it. Jesus is worth loving for, and He's worth living for.

[1:11] He's worth dying for, and He's worth suffering for. He also writes them to instruct them that they would know how they should live as Christians in the world, and how they should respond when living as a Christian leads to opposition and suffering.

Now, we've been solely, completely in the encouragement section. We've now finished chapter 1, verses 1 through 12, which is all about Peter letting these people know how much God loves them and what He's done for them.

This is typical in the Bible that we'll first find out who we are in Christ before we ever hear about anything that God wants us to do or demands of us or commands us. Some people talk about this as the indicative and the imperative.

First, we have the indicative. We're told what's true about us. And then the imperative, God tells us what He requires of people who follow Him. And so we are now in the instruction section. We are fully out of the encouragement. We're starting that today with verse 13.

And as we come to this, it raises a lot of tricky questions, both for people in the church and people outside of the church. In the church, there's always the tricky question of how do we balance the fact that salvation is absolutely a free gift of God that we cannot merit in any way, and God also requires our obedience to Him.

[2:27] How do we balance, in other words, God's grace and what He requires of us in His law? For those outside of the church, the question is, why is it that Christians are concerned so much with behaving in certain ways?

Aren't Christians just a bunch of legalists who think that they're better than other people? Or maybe Christians are just people who are really uptight. And if they would understand the glorious world that's outside there for them, if they would get outside of their shells, then they would be a lot more fun to be with.

And so it's with that we're going to dive into 1 Peter 1, starting at verse 13. How do we relate our holiness to our relationship with God? As we come to this, remember that this is God's Word.

And God tells us that His Word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold. And it is sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. And that is why we're going to read together, starting at verse 13.

Verse 16.

[3 : 47] Verse 20.

I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word.

Father in heaven, we thank you again that week after week you speak to us. And we come admitting that we need that. We need your instruction and your guidance.

Otherwise, we are helpless like sheep without a shepherd. So we ask for your help now that you would send your Holy Spirit to assist us.

That you would clear our minds. That you'd open our eyes. And that you'd unstop our ears. And you'd soften our hearts. That we would know and see and believe and understand everything that is written about you in your Word.

[5 : 16] We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. There was a time when I was in college.

This happens with many people who are in college. When my parents came to visit. And this wasn't unusual. It didn't happen all the time. Because I was in college in North Carolina. And my parents were in Maryland. So it was a little bit of a drive.

And I think at this point in their visit. I don't know if I'd even met them yet. They'd been on campus. But maybe I was in class. And I ran into one of my classmates. It was a woman who was in the orchestra with me.

And she said, I saw your parents on campus. Now, I didn't talk to them. I didn't meet them. I've never seen them before. But I saw your parents on campus.

And I know that they were your parents. Because they look just like you. And if you've met my parents, like some of you have.

[6 : 11] You know that that's true. And there's a hot debate. Because some people will come up to me and say, Man, I met your mom. And you look just like your mom. And then people will come up to me and say, I met your dad.

And wow, you look just like your dad. Of course, both of those things can't be true. At the same time, all secrets revealed, all hearts made known, here's the truth.

I look 100% like my mom. With one exception, I have my dad's eyes. And eyes are really important, right? They're one of the first things that you see.

So people look at my eyes and they think, He looks just like his father. Or they see the rest of me and they think, He looks just like his mother. And of course, I have some of my father's mannerisms, too. Peter is writing to these people.

And he is telling them, You need to look like your father. Verse 14. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

[7 : 14] But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. Verse 16. Since it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy. And if you call on him as father.

In other words, if what we've talked about in the encouragement part of 1 Peter is true, if God is our father, if he's coming back for us, if he has an inheritance that he's prepared for us, and if he's chosen us and we belong to him, then we should also look like him.

As many of you know, I talk about Subarus from time to time. I drive a Subaru. And if you were to ask me why I drive a Subaru, there's many reasons that I could give you. They're safe.

They have all-wheel drive. There was that one time that my Subaru was totaled, but I walked out without a scratch. There are good cars in Colorado. Everyone drives them here. And those would all be good reasons.

Those are not why I drive a Subaru. I drive a Subaru because in the late 90s, my father read about this new car coming out called the Subaru Forester and how wonderful it was, and he went out and bought one.

[8 : 27] And then as his son, he raised me to drive Subarus. You could also ask me why I'm a Presbyterian. Now, there's lots of good reasons that I'm a Presbyterian.

I believe it's true. I believe that what we believe is what the Bible teaches. I trust our form of church government. I'm also a Presbyterian because my father is a Presbyterian.

And he raised me in the Presbyterian church. And so when it comes to Subarus and it comes to Presbyterianism, I could give you lots of reasons for what I do. But at the end of the day, a lot of it has to do with my father.

As Christians, why do we put off passions of our former ignorance? Verse 14. Why is it that we don't gossip or slander people? I could give you a lot of reasons.

I could tell you that it's not going to help your relationships and at the end it's going to catch up with you. I could tell you that it's not going to be worth it. But the real reason is this. Our Father God is someone who speaks words that are both true and life-giving.

[9 : 35] And so our words should be true and life-giving as well. You could ask me why it is that Christians take marriage so seriously and discourage divorce so strongly.

And I could give you all kinds of reasons. I could say, well, you know, sociological studies show that families are in better shape when certain things happen in certain orders and circumstances. And, you know, it's just there's ways in which this helps society.

Maybe those things are true. The reason that we take marriage as a covenant so seriously and discourage divorce so strongly is because our Father God is a covenant-keeping God.

And He has a never-stopping, never-giving-up, unbreaking, always-and-forever love for His people. And He does not leave them no matter what. And so we reflect that same kind of love in our relationships to each other.

Why is it that we as Christians take our work so seriously? That we want to work as for the Lord? Well, I could give you many reasons. It's really nice to have a paycheck.

[10 : 39] And it's helpful to have something to do in the morning. And that's true. But the reason that we work is because our Father God is the creator of the heavens and the earth. And He created work and He gave it to us to represent His image in the world.

And so that when we work as people in the military and we protect the innocent from the wicked, we are doing the work of God. When you're an artist and you are painting, you are helping reflect God's beauty and His goodness into the world and telling a story that is true.

When you're working as a parent, you're reflecting God as a greater parent. We work because we are looking like our Father in heaven.

Why do we put off all forms of sexual sin? We could say, well, we think it leads to certain kinds of health and it has, you know, favorable outcomes. But the real reason is if we're Christians because we don't make promises with our bodies that we cannot keep because we serve a God who in His body gave it up on our behalf.

And so we use our lives to sacrifice for other people rather than taking advantage of them. We are holy because our Father God is holy.

[11 : 58] And so our holiness, our obedience after God, it's not a form of legalism. It's not something that we do to prove that we're better than other people.

But just like a good child looks like his father, God's people are holy because their God is holy. That's what 1 Peter is saying here.

As He who has called you is holy, you also be holy. In other words, look like your Father. Be like your Father. He's chosen you.

You belong to Him. And so now look like Him. This is relational language here that He's using. Of course, there's a problem, right?

I look like my parents because I'm a biological son. Jesus reflects the Father because He is the Son.

[13 : 01] That's what He tells us in Matthew 11. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. We are adopted by God so we don't look like God.

We don't reflect His character and His holiness in the ways that He asks of us. And so there's a tension there, right? That's part of the tension of holiness is that we're asked to grow into something that we're not.

And so that leads us to verse 17. 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.

What in the world does fear have to do with obedience? If we're not legalists, if we believe we don't earn anything from God, what is Peter trying to say? First of all, he's saying just because God is your Father doesn't mean He's not also the judge.

And there's going to come a time when He's going to examine each person's works, what we've done in this life. For those people who belong to Him, who've been chosen by Him and called by Him, those works will demonstrate that they're true children.

[14 : 09] Their holiness will show that they belong to God. This doesn't mean that their holiness earned them favor from God. It doesn't mean it made them the children. But it demonstrates that God truly chose them and was at work in their lives.

In other words, don't take this for granted. If God is your Father, don't forget that He's also the judge. He is working holiness into your life. If He has truly chosen you as His Son, that holiness will be evident.

And on the last day, when He looks at your life, He will say, yes, that is my child. That's the person that I've chosen. Now, this is still a tension to try to understand, right?

There's free grace and there's also obedience. And everything I said probably doesn't resolve that for you. What does the obedience have to do?

Why is He going to look at our obedience if He's already given us salvation? Why is He going to be not just a father, but a judge? And the best way I can explain it to you is this. My father's a Subaru driver, right?

[15:13] He has the 1998 Red manual transmission Subaru Forester. My dad loves driving the manual transmission. At some point, he decides, living in the Washington, D.C. area, I don't like driving a manual transmission anymore in Beltway traffic around D.C.

And my youngest son also needs a car. So what am I going to do? I'm going to give to him the red manual transmission 1998 Subaru Forester.

This is in 2010. There's only one problem. I don't know how to drive a manual transmission. Try to defend millennials as much as I can.

Got to call a spade a spade. So what do I do? I have to go out with my father to learn how to drive the manual transmission. We go out to the library parking lot. I've already learned how to drive once.

It's time to learn how to drive twice. And it's not easy, right? If you've learned... Now, there are some people, they learn to drive a manual because they say, well, I showed up at the car dealership and I bought the manual and I knew I had to get it home.

[16:17] I know people like that. I'm not one of them. I had to learn to drive it, right? It was frustrating. There was many failures. There were many times when I stalled out the car and it was scary. It's not a good feeling to stall out and have a car shaking on you, right?

But how else am I going to receive the manual transmission Forester? There is nothing that I did to merit that car or earn it. There's nothing I did to deserve it.

The reason I received it is because I'm my father's son. I didn't pay him anything for it. It did not benefit my father in any way to sit in the passenger seat while I stalled out. I had nothing to offer him.

But it was necessary for me to learn how to drive manual to receive the car. There is nothing that we do to merit or earn God's gracious gift of salvation to us.

We receive it because and only because we are his sons and daughters. And our obedience is necessary. Holiness, personal holiness is non-negotiable.

[17:35] Another way to look at it would be this. Call on him as father who judges impartially to each one's deeds. Conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. In other words, if you have no concern at all with personal holiness, holiness, and you do not have any grief over your sin, then you should seriously question whether God is your father.

However, if God is your father, then you will stay in the car and stall out as many times as necessary. holiness and perfection are not the same thing.

Peter stalled out over and over again. He stalled out dramatically. Peter rolled backwards multiple yards at stoplights. And Peter never left the car.

And I wasn't alone in that car trying to figure it out by myself, right? I was in the driver's seat. Who was in the passenger's seat? My father, who is there with his presence and his instruction.

If we're pursuing holiness, if we are being holy as God is holy, we have him with us and beside us, giving us his presence and his instruction. Holiness is not perfection.

[19:02] But those who are Christians will stay in the car. Now this was 2010. Fast forward to 2013. I'm a proficient manual transmission driver at this point.

Thank you very much. I've gotten through my evangelism phase. Some of you are familiar with this. There's car evangelism where you put someone in your passenger seat and it becomes very clear after driving with you for some time that their odds of meeting the Lord are very high.

so they need to make a decision. It's urgent. I'd gotten beyond that phase. And I knew how to drive and I was teaching at that point at the school and my students knew that I could drive a manual transmission.

And there was one student whose father, not making this up, was going to give her for her 16th birthday a 2013 Chevy Camaro. kids don't get any ideas.

There's only one problem. She, as any self-respecting muscle car driver, wanted to make sure she was driving a manual. She didn't know how. So she asked me to teach her. So now the roles are reversed.

[20 : 14] I said, yes, you can learn, you can stall out on my 1998 Forester which is just, handles exactly like a 2013 Camaro. You can take part, in part, what will one day be yours in full.

So we went out to a church parking lot at the church where I went. And she stalled out and she stalled out again and I still remember sitting there in the passenger seat and so scared from stalling out she started shaking.

So we sat there for a little bit. She was physically shaking all over and I waited with her and I said, well, you ready to try again? And she tried again and she tried again and finally we made it all the way around the parking lot.

Later I, about a year later I asked her to show me how far she progressed and she took me out in the Camaro and I thought, we're going to go out, we're going to safely exit the parking lot and then we're going to go onto the highway.

She's going to show me on the highway, just, you know, smooth shifting. We never got to the highway. She starts like whipping around curves in this parking lot, turfing on grass. I'm in total shock.

[21 : 27] Okay, beside the point. Point is this, how did she get beyond the shaking? Would have been easy for her to ask me to drive her back.

Her father had not bought the Camaro at that point because she could have said, Dad, what I really want is the automatic transmission and yet after failing out multiple times she kept working.

Why did she keep pushing for it? The reason that she kept destroying the transmission on my Forester was because, verse 13, she had prepared her mind for action and being sober-minded, she had set her hope fully on the 2013 Chevy Camaro that would be brought to her at the revelation of her 16th birthday.

It was her hope in what was to come that kept her pursuing what she wanted. And even when it was hard, she did not give up. She wasn't perfect, but she stayed in the car.

And she stayed in the car because her hope was greater than what she had to lose. her hope was greater than her fear. Brothers and sisters, we pursue holiness stalling out over and over again because our hope is greater than our fear.

[22 : 52] We prepare our minds for action and being sober-minded set our hope fully not on a 2013 Camaro, but something much greater, the grace that would be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

There's two commands in this passage. One is to be holy and the other is to have hope. How do we remain steadfast in becoming holy?

It's because we have hope. And it's not something easy even more than that 15, 16 year old. Even more difficult than learning to drive a manual transmission.

is as obedient children not being conformed to the passions of our former ignorance. Verse 14.

Holiness is not easy. But God has given us a hope that is large enough to motivate us and empower us.

And as our Heavenly Father, He is with us with His presence and His instruction. Like Peter, we will fail over and over again.

[24 : 04] Like Peter, we remain with Jesus in the car. And like Peter, if we remain with Him, we will grow in grace and holiness.

We will not look the same 10 years from now that we look today. Peter gives us a hope sandwich here. Verse 13. Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you.

And then verse 18. 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.

There's nothing that we've done to earn our place as God's children. There's nothing that I did to deserve the Subaru Forester.

There's nothing that this daughter did to deserve the 2013 Camaro. It was bought by their fathers. How much more precious is the blood of Jesus Christ?

[25 : 20] your place as a son or a daughter of God is not based on your obedience. It's not based on anything you have done or anything you will do.

It's based on one thing and that's Jesus' blood. And it's the blood that he spilled when he died on the cross for us and our sins. Ransoming us. This word here means to buy us out of slavery. Buying us out of the slavery to sin by his blood. Verse 20, 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 your hope are in God.

That's the end of the hope sandwich. Verse 13, set your hope fully. Verse 21, your faith and your hope are in God and that hope is in what? That God actually raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory.

We've talked before about some of the reasons that we have confidence in Jesus' resurrection. One of them is the witness of Peter. Peter would have no reason to live this life as a disciple suffering after Jesus' death instead of returning to the much simpler life of a fisherman unless he had actually seen Jesus after he'd risen from the dead.

[26 : 40] We talked on Easter about 1 Corinthians 15 which names witnesses who were still alive at the time who saw Jesus after he rose from the dead. Paul doesn't summon what's called an invisible army.

He doesn't say, there's just lots of people. He names names of people who are alive who could give testimony about whether they'd seen Jesus or not. Another reason that we have confidence in Jesus as the Messiah who ransomed us through his blood and actually rose from the dead is that there were many Messiahs in the first century who came and claimed to be and do what Jesus did. Unless you're an Old Testament or New Testament scholar, you probably can't name a single one of them. People all over the world know the name of Jesus because he actually died.

He actually rose from the dead. He lived a perfect life and his blood pays the ransom for our sin. And so how is it that we're holy as Christians?

It's not that we're better than other people. It's not that we've earned something that other people haven't earned. But it's that we have a Heavenly Father who has chosen us and he's called us to look like him.

[28 : 03] And as we struggle to look like him, walking the walk of faith and failing many times, he's given us a hope to sustain us. And that hope is the reality that Jesus has actually died and risen from the dead.

And while he gives us that hope, he is with us. He's given us his word and he's given us his presence. And so the hope that motivates us and propels us and keeps us going, it is not a I hope it will rain tomorrow hope.

but it is a I hope the sun will rise again tomorrow hope. It is a sure and firm and steady confidence that we have.

And so that's what gives us the courage and the ability to continue walking with Jesus, sticking with him and never, ever getting out of the car, knowing that he's with us, he loves us, and he's chosen us.

Please pray with me. Dear Father in Heaven, we thank you that we belong to you.

[29 : 12] And we also confess that following after you is challenging and difficult. We face many trials and as we long and work for holiness, we fail over and over again.

We ask that you would remind us of your grace and you would remind us of the blessing that comes from staying with you and that you'd give us everything we need to make it through in this life, following after you and growing in your grace.

We ask these things not because we have earned them or deserved them or merited them in any way. And we don't ask them because we think that our obedience helps us when it comes to our standing before you.

But we ask them because Jesus was obedient on our behalf and ransomed us from the slavery of sin. And so we ask it in his name. Amen. this work of God. We ask you