

A Mind Prepared – 1 Peter 1:13
Sermon – Pastor Joe Davis
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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever found yourself living your life for your next vacation? As you get up each morning, you remind yourself that you're one day closer to that awesome trip you've been planning for so long. And your dreams about how amazing it's going to be and how much fun you're going to have help motivate you to keep going and get to work and earn the huge amount of money you're going to need to pull it off. Your hope is so set on this one thing that it affects your mood, how you spend your time and money, and your daily motivation level. You work extra hours, you forgo lots of other activities, and you focus your mind on planning the details and making all the arrangements needed for a wonderful trip. And just thinking about the vacation brightens your day and energizes you.

When I was a kid, I was the recipient of the undeserved grace of being able to go to Hawaii for several weeks each year during the worst time of the Alaska winter – January and February. And you wouldn't believe how the anticipation of those trips affected my hope-level and how I spent my time beforehand. As another dark and ice-cold day dawned at 10:00 am, I would imagine myself soaking up the sun on the beach, riding a boogie board in the warm ocean, eating coconut ice cream, and breathing in the smell of flowers that always greets you when you arrive in Hawaii. And imagine a junior high boy rushing home after school to dive into his homework with no arm twisting by his parents. That was me as I worked frantically to get ahead in my schoolwork so I wouldn't have to even think about it while I was in Hawaii. My hope was set on one thing and it dramatically affected my life as I prepared for it.

Well, as we all know from experience, highly anticipated vacations usually end up being fun and enjoyable, but rarely pan out quite as glorious and perfect as we imagined they would be. But, my friends, there is something awaiting us in the future that will never be a disappointment or a let-down. Even our wildest imaginations don't come close to how wonderful it will be. And there will be no family arguments about what we're going to do each day...no hotels that end up

being not quite as advertised...no reservations that were lost...no cars that break down...no bad weather or disasters that keep us from doing what we had planned...no selfishness within us that makes us grumpy and short-tempered with each other. Instead, all of our expectations will be far-exceeded when we come into our imperishable, undefiled and unfading inheritance being kept safely for us right now in a place that will hold our affections, our fascination, our awe, our wonder...for all of eternity. If there's anything to look forward to...to set our hope on...to diligently prepare for right now...this is it!

The Spirit of God through Peter has been laying this future out for us and showing us how to prepare for it NOW in verses 1 through 12 of 1 Peter. And it will be so much better than any vacation, which – I don't know if you've noticed – always seem to come to an end. This will be the life that is truly life and will never come to an end in a place designed and prepared for us by the most creative of all creators...the One who just for fun and to reveal his awesome glory and creativity created planets and stars and galaxies that even the strongest telescope and the most technologically advanced space machines are only beginning to uncover... the One who created flowers and majestic mountains and green grass and tropical paradises and life of infinite variety. If there's something worth consuming your mind and time and energies to prepare for, this is it!

And that's what Peter expects us to conclude after hearing what he's told us in verses 1 through 12. He begins verse 13 with the word, "Therefore." In other words, here's how what I've just told you about your great salvation should affect your life right now.

QUICK REVIEW OF WHERE WE ARE IN FIRST PETER:

1:1-1:2 **Greeting Us with God's Will**

1:3-1:12 **The Great Salvation God Has Brought to Us**

- A. Born again to a living hope and an imperishable inheritance (1:3-5)
- B. A salvation that brings joy even through the times of testing (1:6-9)
- C. A salvation that prophets and angels longed to understand (1:10-12)

1:13-2:10 **Therefore...a Big Picture View of the Saved Life**

- A. Setting your faith and hope in God (1:13-21)
- B. Learning to love through knowing and obeying the Word (1:22-2:3)
- C. Living with the body to proclaim God's excellencies (2:4-10)

- 2:11-4:19 **Practical Guidance for Living the Saved Life**
- A. Overview: Living as a sojourner and exile (2:11-12)
 - B. Glorifying God by submitting to authority (2:13-17)
 - C. Glorifying God as a servant or slave (2:18-25)
 - D. Glorifying God as a wife (3:1-6)
 - E. Glorifying God as a husband (3:7)
 - F. Glorifying God as a unified body (3:8-12)
 - G. Glorifying God in suffering and testing (3:13-4:19)
- 5:1-5:11 **God's Survival Kit for Suffering Sojourners**
- 5:12-14 **Farewell – "Peace to all of you who are in Christ."**
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So, let's continue our study this morning by reading verse 13, the opening statement in the big-picture view of the saved life and how it's meant to operate. Here we go:

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.

In this simple verse, Peter gives us 3 mind-related reactions that should result from a correct understanding of our great salvation and the glorious inheritance awaiting us in heaven. And these mind-related reactions provide the foundation for the life of obedient discipleship to Jesus which is God's will for each of us in this life, as he prepares us to reign with him when he returns.

PREPARE YOUR MIND FOR ACTION

So, let's begin with the first. Peter first tells us this: *Prepare your mind for action.* Mind preparation. The literal translation is, "Gird up the loins of your mind." In the cultural context in which this was written, the image was of a person with long, flowing robes needing to gather up his robes before walking or running. If this wasn't done, he would have a very hard time getting anywhere fast and at worst he would trip over his robes and wipe out. So the idea is getting yourself ready for movement and action, and the focus is on doing this for your mind and your thinking. In other words, get yourself ready mentally to take godly action.

Additionally, this idea of girding up the loins for action has a tie-in with the Passover in Egypt before the Exodus. The Israelites were instructed to gird up

their loins...to have their belongings packed and ready to go...ready to travel and follow God's lead at any moment...***with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand*** (see Exodus 12:11), was how the LORD expressed it to Moses. The idea again was being ready to follow God at any moment wherever he would lead.

And notice, back in verse 13 of 1 Peter 1, that being ready mentally requires PREPARATION... intentional effort to get the mind ready so it can discern God's will and act on it. In other words, this doesn't just happen automatically because we're saved. We each need to be actively preparing our minds so they're ready to hear what God is saying...and ready to move when he tells us to move...ready to respond when he leads us to do something...ready to put his Word into practice.

Jesus, of course, gives us the perfect example of how this is done and what kind of life results from it. As we've studied the gospels, over and over we've seen that Jesus knew God's Word inside and out and was extremely sensitive to the Father's leading and guiding through the Holy Spirit, only doing what he was led to do by the Spirit. In this he found great freedom, because he didn't try to do everything or think that he himself had to be available for every problem right now. He calmly walked through life doing what the Spirit led him to do and withdrawing often from the crowds to pray and fellowship with his Father and seek his guidance on decisions and where to go next. Through his study of God's Word and continual prayer, his mind was prepared and he was ready at all times for Spirit-led action.

Scripture elsewhere, specifically in Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 4:23, speaks of this preparation of our minds for action. Both passages describe it as *the renewal of our minds*...causing our minds to grow young again. And this renewal of our minds only happens through regular, prayerful intake of God's Word combined with belief in what it says. When these two combine, the result is a mind prepared and ready for godly action, for obedience, for transformation, for discerning and accomplishing of God's will. To prepare your mind for action, cultivate a love for God's Word and the conviction that it truly is perfect truth worth more than anything in this world. Then you'll be ready to put it into practice...to follow it...to take action on it.

As the writer of Psalm 119 expresses it: ***SINCE I love Your commands more than gold, even the purest gold, I carefully FOLLOW ALL Your precepts and hate every false way*** (Psalm 119:127-128). Develop a love for God's Word and the daily practice of prayerfully breathing it in, meditating on it and acting on it. That's how your mind will be renewed and ready for action. That's how you'll gather up your robes and be ready to move out at a moment's notice to accomplish God's will.

BE ALERT AND AWAKE IN YOUR MIND

And this brings us to the second mind-related reaction Peter expects from those who understand their great salvation: *Be alert and awake in your mind*. Be ***sober-minded***, Peter says. He instructs us to keep our minds sharp and alert and aware, able to observe and listen and see what God is doing and where's he's leading us in any situation. This mental state is the exact opposite of being drunk with wine or beer. A person who's drunk has a dull mind that's unaware of what's really going on and that's getting them into all kinds of trouble and embarrassment and causing them to harm themselves and other people. And when they come out of it, they're in a worse state than when they began.

I was recently reading in Proverbs 23:29-35, a very vivid description of drunkenness and the harm and confusion it brings. Listen to this:

29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? 30 Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. 31 Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. 32 In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. 33 Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things. 34 You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. 35 "They struck me," you will say, "but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink."

What an accurate description of drunkenness and the effects it has on people! Loss of self-control, confusion, bodily harm, unaware that they're laying down in the middle of the ocean, about to sink to the bottom.

But there's another spiritual effect of drunkenness that's often overlooked. Listen to what it is from the book of Isaiah, chapter 5, verses 11 and 12:

¹¹ Woe to those who rise early in the morning in pursuit of beer, who linger into the evening, inflamed by wine. ¹² At their feasts they have lyre, harp, tambourine, flute, and wine. They do not perceive the Lord's actions, and they do not see the work of his hands (HCSB).

With a mind dull and numb from drunkenness, overeating and entertainment, *they are unable to perceive what the Lord is doing and they don't even see the work of his hands.* Their eyes are blinded to the Lord and his work and they're totally out of touch with him. Not a healthy place to be!

But what if there are other forms of drunkenness in the world today...ones that are more acceptable to Christians? Hopefully we're all aware that getting drunk with alcohol is always wrong. Scripture makes that abundantly clear. But what if we're getting drunk on something else. What if we're drunk on what the world is constantly offering us to pass the time and give us pleasure and keep us busy and entertain us? What if we're so busy and consumed with these things that our minds are too often dull and insensitive to God's leading and the purposes he has for us in this life? Because in speaking of being sober-minded, Peter is not just talking about staying away from alcohol. He's talking about keeping our minds clear and alert and sensitive to God at all times.

The picture I get again of being sober-minded in the way Peter is speaking of here is the one we have of Jesus from our study of the gospels: never in a hurry, but calm, steady, focused, realizing that the Father's will was there to be accomplished every day...knowing that the Father had purposes for each and every day he was walking this earth and those purposes were what his life was about. Whether Jesus was building something out of wood, traveling to another city, or going to a wedding, he walked out each day with expectation, sober-minded, alert, looking for the Father's will and always following it.

But the question we all need to ask ourselves is this: Do we fill our lives with so much activity and so much to do each day that our minds become dull and distracted and we miss God's still, small voice? Do we miss having a time alone with him and his Word daily where he can renew our minds and prepare us for

action? Do we miss the ways he's continually and quietly communicating his steadfast love to us? Did you know the earth is FULL of the steadfast love of the Lord (Psalm 33:5; Psalm 119:64)? In other words, it's everywhere! Do we have a mind sober enough to see it ourselves and to point it out to others? And do we have a mind sensitive enough to see where God is leading us each day and to follow him there?

Prepare your mind for action and be sober-minded. We can't do either of these things if our lives are so jam-packed that we can barely think, let alone find time to daily interact with God's Word, talk with him in prayer, and listen and watch for his leading throughout each day.

SET YOUR HOPE FULLY ON FUTURE GRACE

But perhaps the third mind-related reaction Peter expects from those who truly understand the significance and graciousness of their great salvation, will help us change this all too common scenario. What will help us change our ways here is taking seriously Peter's third command: *Set your hope fully on future grace*. He says: **"...set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."** That sounds a lot like putting all your eggs in one basket, doesn't it?

EGGS IN A BASKET ILLUSTRATION ILLUSTRATION: The way we tend to put our hope in lots of different things, as opposed to gathering it all up and setting it all down in one place...and leaving it there.

Imagine what a difference it would make in your life if you gathered up all your hope and placed it in one place, never to be moved...if you placed it all in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And what if preparing yourself for that glorious day became the overarching focus of your entire life! You'd probably be freed up to say no to a lot of stuff that eats up your time these days. You'd certainly never want to miss out on daily renewing your mind and allowing it to be transformed by God's Word. And in knowing that this life is essential preparation for that day when you receive your inheritance and your job duties for reigning with Jesus Christ, you'd realize that how you live your life right now is going to have a profound impact on eternity.

If only we comprehended the full picture of the grace that will be brought to us when Christ returns. In Christ, we're already the recipients of the firstfruits of grace...the undeserved and unearned favor and love of God...and his very presence dwelling inside of us through the Holy Spirit, comforting us, empowering us, guiding us into truth, and communicating the Father's will to us. But these are just the firstfruits...just the beginning of God's amazing grace. How much more full and glorious and astounding will be the fullness of God's grace that will unfold visibly before us at Christ's return! Take some time to meditate with me right now on these descriptions of the new heavens and the new earth revealed in Scripture and you'll get a taste. Even the most amazing tropical paradise on earth won't even begin to compare.

Revelation 21:1-5a

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

Revelation 21:10-14

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— ¹³ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Revelation 21:18-25

¹⁸ The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. ²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

Revelation 22:

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

CONCLUSION

For those of you in Christ today, do you believe that this is your future and that it's even more certain than the sun rising tomorrow? And that God himself is personally guarding you right now with his power through faith to enable you to make it there? And that this life right now is not where your hope is to be found; it's simply preparation for this glorious day and this incomparable grace (the full favor and goodness of God lavished upon you) that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed in his full glory and majesty and awesome power?

Because if this is our future, and if we believe, as Scripture teaches, that how we live this life right now affects our experience there and is about preparing us to love our God and reign with Christ as our faith is proved genuine through the trials and challenges and joys and struggles we face right now; then the time is NOW to fully cooperate with God, pursue him and allow him to do his work in and through us. I don't know about you, but I want there to be nothing but joy when I see Jesus. I want to hear him say, "Well done, Joe. I'm so happy you're home, and I'm so proud that you kept seeking, kept following; that you held tightly to the faith I gave you, and that you were all about accomplishing my will on earth by my power for my glory. Welcome home and enjoy all that I've been preparing for you!" Don't you want to hear the same?

Then let's not squander or waste the great salvation and grace and living hope we've been given in Christ. Let's put all the eggs of our hope in the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Let's live our lives now for the eternity of our amazing grace! Just as I so quickly shifted how I spent my time and my attitude toward homework, so I could get ready for a wonderful vacation in Hawaii; let's rearrange our lives and what we're doing here on this earth to fully prepare for eternity in heaven.

Let's be preparing our minds for action daily and continually – loving his Word more than gold. My friends, if we here in this church stepped out of those nasty statistics that say only a small percentage of Christians actually read their Bibles daily; if every person here left that behind and began loving God's Word and prayerfully reading and applying it every day – if we began to really be disciples of Jesus – we would soon begin thinking and acting more and more like God every day – God's Word never returns void without accomplishing what God intends it to do – and this church and this community will never be the same. Lord, let it be! May we gird up the loins of our minds daily and continually for godly action.

And let's be sober-minded, not so busy and distracted and drunk on the things of the world that we can't perceive what the Lord is saying and what he's seeking to do in our lives and in the world. Let's learn to move through life with eyes wide open, smelling the flowers, seeing the glory of the Lord and his steadfast love that's everywhere on earth – sensitive to his leading, and following him to accomplish his will by his power. Opportunities to do that are all around for those who are watching and listening!