

Prepare for Action

1 Peter 1:13-21

“13 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. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” 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, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 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.”

She lived in Paris, at the end of a hallway so shrouded in darkness she called it: “The Dungeon.”

*It was 1981. Kathey Ireland, the 5’10” up-and-coming supermodel who would grace the covers of *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Forbes*, and *Sports Illustrated*, was just 18 years old.

*When **the world** looked at Kathy, they saw a **beautiful face**.

*When Kathy **looked in the mirror**, she saw a **lonely heart**.

*Even in **the most beautiful city in the world**, the darkness of her **hallway** was a symbol of the **condition** of her heart & **direction** of her life

*That night in Paris as she unpacked her suitcase, **she found a Bible** secretly put there by her mom.

(How many are thankful for their prayerful tenacity of mothers.)

*Kathy admits: *“I didn’t even know how to read one. I’d never read one before in my life.”*

*But there in the middle of the night, she opened to Matthew and read about Jesus, being captivated by both his power and how he truly honored women.

*In that moment Kathy recalls: *“...I knew I was holding the truth in my hands...He became my Lord and Savior. The experience forever changed my life.”*

*It’s been 40 years since that day, and **this week she told Fox News**: *“The gospel is the core of every decision I make...I cannot compromise my faith. I’m just so thankful for God’s grace because I have made so many messes in my life.”*

- How is it that people can be **surrounded by beauty**, and yet feel so empty and lonely?
- What does it look like to live **Up North** and have the gospel be at the core of our decisions?

*For those answers, we **open the suitcase** and turn the Bible to 1 Peter who writes to **Christian refugees** who left their home in Israel where it had become dangerous to be a Christian, and fled **UP North**.

*Like TC, Turkey is **almost 45th par, surrounded by water**, and **blooming** with **Cherry trees**.

***Peter’s goal: Prepare believers to live Up North...in a land of beauty...for the glory of God.**

1. **Live like God's children,** (v.13-16)

- *How we think* (v.13)
- *How we act* (v.14-16)

*Peter makes the **strong connection**: "*minds...action;*" "*minds...obedience;*" "*minds...conduct*"

*He knows that every action, at some level, begins with a thought.

*As an old Puritan author wrote: "***Thoughts are seeds of actions.***" (Thomas Sibbes)

*Which is why Scripture tells us to **take every thought captive**...because NOT every thought is good...and NOT every thought should be obeyed.

*Or as **woman speaker said at a recent youth conference**:

*"What you set your **attention** is what drives your **affection**;
And what drives your **affection** determines your **action.**"*

*So, Peter calls believers to *prepare their "minds for action"* (KJV: *gird up loins of your mind*)

*Think of **Drivers Training, which for parents** is **hours of boredom** followed by moments where your life flashes before your eyes.

*But **for students**, it's **preparing their mind to think clearly and take action.**

*Which is why Peter calls us to be '*Sober-minded*' (NLT: **Think Clearly**)

***Two years ago, a NH man was convicted** to make a **change in his thinking/actions.**

*For much of adult life, alcohol played a daily role. Most days he "*would have something to knock the edge off;*" a beer (or two); glass of wine (or bottle); better yet, a few shots of bourbon.

*2 years ago this weekend, during 1 Corinthians he felt God was calling him to give it up.

*"The sermon series on 'course corrections' REALLY set me **thinking**. I felt God leading me to stop (drinking) - but I didn't like the idea. I found myself in our old barn and I knelt down on one knee and talked with the Lord - told Him I would quit if He gave me the strength to do it - and told Him I didn't think I needed to stop, but if He wanted me to I would. I haven't had a drink of alcohol from that day on - it was Mother's Day 2019..."*

*What course correction of **thought or action** would God want you to change this Mothers Day?

*What area of life do you need to **kneel in a barn** and ask for God's help to change?

***Peter wants to prepare those in Turkey**: "*Do not be conformed...but be holy.*"

*It's the same thing Paul said to those **in Rome**: "*Do not be conformed...but be transformed...*"

*It's the same truth for those here in **UP North MI**: "***...be holy in all your conduct***"

*It's a call to put the **gospel at the core of our thinking and decisions.**

***Have you ever read Leviticus?** It's not the first book we recommend for new believers to read.

*But with all of its complexities, Peter quotes the key words: ***“You shall be holy...”***

*Some of you have used ***hand sanitizer*** this past year. The call to ‘be holy’ is basically a call to ***“Sanitize”*** your life from impurities that so easily cling.

*But that sound so big and lofty and unattainable? ***What does it actually look like to be holy?***

**And how can we be holy without being weird or bizarre?*

***Peter had a friend...John the Baptist.** (In fact, Peter’s brother had been a disciple of John)

*John was a preacher whose sermons were all about **repentance and holiness.**

“Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.” (Luke 3:7)

*It’s fascinating that when **people heard his message**, they responded with a question:

Crowds: *“What shall we do?”*

Tax collectors: *“What should we do?”*

Soldiers: *“What should we do?”*

*IOW: They wanted to know **how holiness required them to live.** ***What shall we do?***

*John’s response to each was a call to put **holiness into everyday life:**

Be Generous. Have financial integrity. Be kind and content.

*Let’s not **complicate holiness.** It is **sanitizing our lives** and putting faith into action.

2. **...and put your faith into action,** (v.17-19)

- *Be consistent (with our claim)* (v.17)
- *Be mindful (of the cross)* (v.18-19)

“And if you call on him as Father...conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile...”

*The people reading this letter are quite literally **in exile Up North.**

*They were **refugees without passports; citizens without a country; fugitives without a HOME!**

*Imagine **fleeing to the U.P...or worse, to Canada!**

*In a biblical sense, Scripture calls us: ***Strangers. Foreigners. Aliens. Citizens of heaven.***

*Truth: **We don’t think of ourselves like that.** In fact, we life is so good **“Up North”** even our coffee cups tell us: ***“Up North is my Happy Place.”***

*But: ***“More important than living in a Happy Place, is living for a Holy God.”***

*They may have been **refugees on the run**, but more importantly they were **redeemed by blood**

*The reason they **conduct themselves with reverence**, is they had been ***“...ransomed from futile ways...not by perishable things such as silver or gold, but by the precious blood of Christ...”***

*Money did not work back then, and money will not work today.

*The only thing that can rescue us from our futile ways is the **precious blood of Jesus**

*Do you realize how **precious the blood of Jesus is?** Lit: 'Costly, Valuable, Honored.'

What can wash away our sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

*Have you ever called upon Jesus and asked him to deliver you from your futile ways?

***Here's the point.** Peter brings this to mind in order to remind us of **our conduct Up North:**

*"Throughout our time UP NORTH, our **conduct** should be **consistent** with our claim."*

***One girl who got baptized last week was 9 years old. She wrote a compelling testimony about how we are to live for Jesus...and I give it to you misspellings and all:**

"Jesus wants us to go down the right road, not the deviles. But for that to happen, we need to trust God so he can lead us down that path, not the deviles road! The devil will try to temp us. We need to tell the devil "NO, THIS PRITTY FACE IS NOT COMEING!" Screem it. Make him scard, like BOO! You tell him that you are to busy letting God guid you down the golden road. Because who wasts there time going to HELL when you can be busy with Jesus!

*Why waste your time on futile ways? **If God is your Father...and Christ has redeemed you by His precious blood...live every day with your PRITTY FACE aimed at coming King of glory.**

3. ...clinging to God's unfolding plan! (v.20-21)

20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 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."

***In two verses, Peter gives a glimpse at God's unfolding plan in history, from start to finish.**

***Before** the story was even written, God's plan was to send a Savior.

***In the middle of the story,** this Savior came and died...but God raised him from the dead and exalted him to the highest office where He was given all glory and power.

***NOW,** as the story unfolds, people like you and I are "**believers in God**" whose entire faith and hope are centered on the coming kingdom of our God.

*Yes, we are **exiles, strangers, and aliens** who live in a world of darkness.

*But since we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, our hope in the kingdom to come.

Action Steps:

- **Put faith into action.**

"If you call on Him as Father...conduct yourselves..."

*What is one area where you could put faith into action?

*As John's disciples asked: *What shall we do?*

- If we owe money, pay it.
- If we stole property, return it.
- If we possess plenty, share it.
- If we own a Bible, read it.
- If we watch Netflix, filter it.
- If we are wrong, admit it.
- If we get wronged, forgive it.
- If we think wrong, correct it.

- **Put futile ways behind you.**

"Who wasts there time going to HELL when you can be busy with Jesus!"

*Peter reminds us we have been ransomed **from the futile ways inherited by our parents...**

*I wonder what "futile ways" we are still wasting time with?

- **Ask God to change you.**

"You shall be holy, for I am holy."

*Holiness is not complicated, but it is costly.

*It is a lifelong process of **aligning our lives to him**, making **daily incremental adjustments**.

*Throughout our time in exile, we aim to conduct ourselves with reverence.

*We allow the Information...to produce Transformation...and change our Destination

*Two years ago when the New Hope man knelt down and asked God to give Him strength to course correct, God proved faithful.

*Do you know that man is still asking God to help him make other adjustments?

*"My life has been **plagued with flesh struggles** (I'm currently trying to realize victory over being ill-tempered and swearing). Maybe some people don't have that sort of problem, but I sure do! But...it seems like whenever I really, seriously ask the Lord, and talk with Him - **I am delivered.**"*

*How do we live **Up north?**

*We do what Kathy Ireland did. We receive the good news of Jesus and resolve to put God's word at the center of our thinking and decision making.

*We say along with the song: *"Take my life and let it be...consecrated Lord to thee."*