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The Bride Made Ready / Holiness; Imputed Righteousness; Salvation; Holy and Righteous / Luke 1:68–75; 1 Peter 1:13–21

This sermon examines how the first advent of Christ secures the work that will be completed at His second coming—namely, the preparation of His Bride in holiness. Drawing from Zechariah's prophecy, Ezekiel and Jeremiah's promises of inward transformation, and Peter's exhortation to holy living, the message emphasizes that obedience is not a requirement for salvation but a result produced by the gospel. Believers are called to have minds prepared for action, spirits made sober, and hope fixed entirely on the future grace that will be revealed at Christ's return. Holiness, therefore, is the inevitable fruit of belonging to Christ and the evidence that we are indeed the Bride being made ready for the coming King.

Christmas Scripture Reading 2

After centuries of silence, God broke in with a word of grace. Angels were sent, not to kings and rulers, but to ordinary people—Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph—declaring that the time of fulfillment had come. Today we hear these announcements and remember that our God is faithful to His promises and near to the lowly.

Luke 1:5–17 LSB

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah, and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and righteous requirements of the Lord.

But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the order of his division,

according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter

the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of the incense offering.

And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

And Zechariah was troubled when he saw *the angel*, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will call his name John.

"And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

"For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and HE WILL NOT DRINK ANY WINE OR STRONG DRINK, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.

"And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.

"And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Luke 1:26–38 LSB

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,

to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you."

But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and was pondering what kind of greeting this was.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

"And behold, you will conceive in *your* womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David,

and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of His kingdom."

But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

"And behold, your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren.

"For nothing will be impossible with God."

And Mary said, "Behold, the slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Matthew 1:18–25 LSB

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the One who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

“And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Now all this took place in order that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled, saying,

“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.”

And Joseph got up from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife,

but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Let us ponder these words as Mary did, trusting that what God has promised, He is sure to bring about.

Prayer

Holy Father,

We have heard Your Word of promise now break forth in revelation—Your angel speaking, faith awakened, grace displayed. You sent messages not to the mighty, but to the lowly; not to the proud, but to the humble. And through this, You have shown us the nature of Your salvation, that it is received not by works, but by grace.

As Mary was overshadowed by the power of the Holy Spirit, so we confess that the righteousness we need cannot arise from ourselves. It must be given, imputed, applied by the Spirit of Christ. You call us to trust in Your Word, just as she did, believing that what You declare, You will surely accomplish.

Lord, as we now prepare to hear Your truth proclaimed, open our hearts to behold the Savior who clothes His bride in spotless garments. Teach us that Christ alone is our righteousness before You; that His obedience, His life, His sacrifice, His resurrection have become the only garment in which we may stand accepted and loved.

Quiet every distraction, dispel every worldly thought, and tune our minds to

Your voice. Lead us deeper into Christ, that we may see His glory and rejoice in His grace.
In His holy name we pray, Amen.

Introduction

In the previous two messages in our current series we have been looking at how the first advent points forward towards the second by discussing what was accomplished by the first coming of Christ. As we previously discussed it is important that as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, the Incarnation, during Christmas we take into account the entirety of the work that was accomplished and is being accomplished as we move forward towards the second advent when Christ will return. As you may recall while the first advent occurred somewhat silently, in a manger in a small town and was proclaimed to the lowest of people, His return will be somewhat more spectacular. In fact John describes it for us this way in the book of Revelation 19:11-19

Revelation 19:11–19 LSB

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; having a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself,

and being clothed with a garment dipped in blood, His name is also called The Word of God.

And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.

And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may STRIKE DOWN THE NATIONS, and He will RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; and HE TREADS THE WINE PRESS OF THE WRATH OF THE RAGE OF GOD, the Almighty.

And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice,

saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God,

so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of strong men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war with Him who sits on the horse and with His army.

As we continue reading through the rest of the Revelation and we see the final things that John describes for us we are confronted with an overwhelmingly beautiful picture of that final consummation between Christ and His bride, between God and His chosen people. This is the fulfillment of all of the promises of God contained within His word. In our first study we examined the truth that the church is truly the fulfillment of what God spoke about in His word regarding His people, we demonstrated how the Old Testament continuously speaks about God's chosen people, not as a singular ethnic group but as a united people consisting of people from all the nations, and we saw how the words of both Jesus and John the Baptist declare Christ as the bridegroom of this people. Last week we saw the justification of those people promised in the prophet Isaiah and fulfilled through the work of Christ as He imputes His righteousness upon His lawful bride, the church, and as a result of that imputed righteousness, God declares us just. As we came to this understanding we referenced Ephesians 5:25–27 where we read, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless."

What an amazing and beautiful truth, to be declared just in the eyes of God, saved and secured by the hand of the almighty for all of eternity, but what if I told you that was only the beginning of what God does in your life. All too often we bring people to this point, we show them this hope and then we walk away and leave them to deal with the rest of their lives without helping them to see that not only does Christ impute His righteousness upon His bride by which God declares them just, all of that being accomplished by grace through faith, but that He also, through the

person and work of the Holy Spirit and the power of what is contained within His word, purposes to shape us into the true fulfillment of that which we read in Ephesians 5:25-27, notice we are presented “in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and blameless”. Christ does not just impute His righteousness and walk away, we are not just declared just and left alone, there is something that results from that work that is lived out in our lives, not as a means to an end but as an evidence of transformation. Which leads us into our text for today, we are reading from two places in scripture this morning so we are going to need to do some and gymnastics, first turn to 1 Peter and put your finger in chapter one. Once you have that marked, turn over to the gospel of Luke, also to the first chapter, and find verses 67-75. We are going to be reading first from Luke and then we will flip over to 1 Peter and read those verses. Most of our time will be spent there but there is a tie in that we need to see between the prophecy of Zechariah after the birth of John the Baptist and the words that Peter wrote to the church. Having found both of your places, I invite you to...

Text

stand for the reading of God’s Holy, Inerrant, Infallible, Authoritative, Sufficient, Complete and Certain Word

We read first the words of Zechariah as he prophesies after John the Baptizer is born:

Luke 1:67–75 LSB

And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

“Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel,

For He visited and accomplished redemption for His people,

And raised up a horn of salvation for us

In the house of David His servant—

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—

Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES,
And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US,
To show mercy toward our fathers,
And to remember His holy covenant,
The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,
To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies,
Might serve Him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.
And now make your way to Peter's first letter to the churches:

1 Peter 1:13–21 LSB

Therefore, having girded your minds for action, being sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

As obedient children, not being conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance,

but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* conduct;

because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your sojourn,

knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold from your futile conduct inherited from your forefathers,

but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood*

of Christ.

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but appeared in these 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 hope are in God.

Our prayer for the morning is adapted from "The Valley of Vison" a prayer entitled "To Be Fit For God"

Lord, You are the Maker and Sustainer of all things. Day and night belong to You, and all creation declares Your glory. Yet we confess that we, Your people—formed by Your power and blessed by Your goodness—have sinned against You. We have resisted the voice of our conscience, ignored the commands of Your Word, and too often turned away from the call of the gospel. Still, in Your mercy, You allow us to live under the hope You have given us in Christ. Father, free our hearts from worldly attitudes and desires, for You have made us new and set our eyes on glory. Help us to see holiness as true beauty. Keep us awake spiritually; strengthen our assurance; and clothe us with the armor of faith as we walk through a world that opposes You. Prepare us for every situation we face. Keep our minds fixed on You, and use every trial to shape us for Your purposes—turning hardship into blessing so that gratitude and praise rise from our hearts as we see Your work more clearly. Make our obedience to You sincere, joyful, and rooted in love. By Your Word and Spirit, correct our thinking with clear and consistent truth. Never let us overlook or take lightly anything You have revealed. Teach us to value the whole gospel—to love its commands as well as its promises. Make us holy in every relationship, responsibility, and season of life. When You allow us to prosper, keep us humble. When You call us to suffer, keep us from losing heart. Give us a steady mind in all circumstances, and help us to see every duty You give as a privilege You entrust to us. Lord, make us content in Christ, bring glory to Your name through our lives, and use us as examples that point others to You. We ask all of these things in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

You may be seated

Holiness Produced

The late Voddie Baucham was delivering a message at a Missions Conference in 2023 said this:

“All the gospel requires is repentance and faith...some of you are going well what about obedience, that’s not what the gospel requires it is what the gospel produces. If the gospel were to require obedience from us, then that would mean that we could be obedient apart from the person and work of Christ and Jesus died for nothing. The gospel produces obedience in us, joyful obedience in us. If we get these things mixed up, that’s where we end up in legalism and moralism and works righteousness and that is when the good news is not really good news at all, it becomes burdensome.”

I start out with this quote because the focus of the message this morning is the Holiness of the Bride and as we talk about this particular topic we will inevitably discuss the term obedience and what that looks like in the life of a believer, more importantly how that is made possible in our lives and we need to understand that in the life of a believer holiness is inevitably produced in us as we undergo the process of sanctification. As we begin this process we need to first understand the word holiness. As we look at the English word we know that anytime we add the suffix ness to a word we are describing the state or quality of that word. When we talk about the holiness of a believer we are talking about the state or quality of that person being holy. Holy, in the English language, in the sense of an individual's life, means being dedicated or devoted to the service of God; being godly, pious or devout and having a spiritually pure quality. You will notice that this is slightly different than when we talk about God being Holy because when we talk about God being holy, He Himself is the definition of holy, in truth we cannot describe something as holy apart from an understanding of God, it is an attribute of God that He self-sufficiently possesses, meaning again that it literally defines His character, it is His character, you cannot make a distinction between God and holiness.

Now, as we talk about the attributes of God, we see that there are those attributes of God which are communicable and those which are non-communicable. To understand those two terms think of diseases or illnesses, communicable diseases are those which can be shared between individuals by the spreading of germs, bacteria, etc. whereas non-communicable diseases are those which cannot be spread. Cancer is an

example of a non-communicable disease or illness where the common cold is a highly communicable illness. So when we talk about the attributes of God there are those, such as omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, etc., that are non-communicable, these belong exclusively to God. On the other hand, the communicable attributes of God are those which can be reflected to a degree in His created beings, us. Holiness is one of those communicable attributes and is something that is produced in us as the Holy Spirit continues to sanctify us through the course of our lives.

The visible manifestation in the life of a believer to this process of sanctification and production of holiness in the life of a believer is our adherence to the commands of God. This is the point where we need to be very careful not to slide into the ditch of legalism to the point where obedience is a requirement for salvation, this is the point of the quote shared above, that we understand that obedience, holiness, sanctification, is produced in us as a RESULT of the change brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit together with the power of the proclaimed Word of God.

Sovereignty and Responsibility

One last item we need to ensure that we are clear on as we move into the text and that is the understanding of two great truths of scripture, namely the Sovereignty of God and the Responsibility of Humanity. These two concepts are covered in depth within the pages of Holy Writ, but we need to understand that they like a pair of rails on a railroad track, both absolutely exist and are taught by scripture but neither violates the other. Scripture clearly teaches in multiple places that God is Sovereign, this is a point we have labored over many times and for the sake of time here this morning we are not going to go back over those, we merely need to state the position so that we are all of the same page. On the other side of that same railroad track we have the rail of Human Responsibility which is also clearly taught in scripture and something that we have labored over diligently in the past. For the sake of our conversation this morning we are going to recognize that these two great truths exist, that are absolutely essential truths, and that one never violates the other (in either direction). It is with these understandings that we turn to our text.

Context and Connection

I first want to point out the prophecy of Zechariah. We are not going to spend much time here, really what I want you to see is in verse 74 where Zechariah clearly points out the purpose of all that God is doing is so that we might "serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness." This is very much inline with the prophetic claims of the Old Testament where passages such as Ezekiel 36:25–27 reads ""Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to do My judgments." or the prophet Jeremiah who writes in Jeremiah 31:33–34 ""But this is the covenant which I will cut with the house of Israel after those days," declares Yahweh: "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. "And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares Yahweh, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.""

All three of these passages and many others clearly demonstrate that as a RESULT of the work of God in the lives of His people there will be a transformation, not only an inward spiritual transformation, but an external transformation. One that changes our very behavior, that produces in us obedience, holiness and right living. This, again, is not in an effort to gain salvation but these are things that WILL, not may, WILL result from this change. Notice Zechariah's words "To grant us", and Ezekiel's "cause you to walk" and "be careful to do". Jeremiah words it differently, but no less effective, unequivocally demonstrating that the new heart give to us by God will contain His law and that as it contains His law it shall move us to where we know Him. This knowledge is two-fold, it is head knowledge to be sure, where we search the deep pages of scripture to increase our understanding of God and His commands and ways, but also, what the Puritans would refer to as experiential knowledge. We must take great care with this term to ensure that we understand what it does and does not mean. This experiential knowledge is the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believer to produce obedient lives that submit to God's authority, seek to live as He has called us to live, and desire to please Him because of what He has already done. It is not an effort to gain more or have an

experience of speaking in tongues or one brought about by earthly activities and notions, but one borne of the Spirit through the Word according to God and for His glory.

Over in 1 Peter we enter in the middle of Peter's opening portion of this letter where he has been talking about their salvation, its source and the truth that what had been revealed to them was something "into which angels long to look". The entirety of this letter is focused on encouraging and exhorting God's people to the "divinely conferred dignity and responsibility of the elect and holy people of God." (Yale Bible Dictionary). It is in this context that we come to our passage where Peter begins with that faithful word, therefore.

The Call

As you should know and hopefully recall by now, when we run into a word like therefore in scripture we need to understand that it is joining what has gone before to what comes after. Peter is saying to the church that as a result of this salvation that he has been describing the results should be as follows. As he moves forward in the passage, which is very rich and very full, our focus is going to be on the commands we find specifically in verses 14-16 where we read again:

1 Peter 1:14–16 "As obedient children, not being conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your conduct; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy.""

Before we get to the commands we find there we need to see the foundational statement that leads into this in verse 13. There we see specifically three actions of the believer as they approach the command. We see that Peter describes them as "having girded their minds", "being sober in the spirit" and "fixing their hope on the grace".

Before we dissect these actions we need to understand the purpose or the final result that should be seen from them, in this case, the call to not live as what we were previous but to live holy "like the Holy One who called" us. This is where we see the effect that the groom has on the bride, recall the words again in Ephesians that demonstrate for us that the results, the cleansing, is being done by the groom. For us, as believers, what this looks

like is that by the work that is done within us, the change that is brought about, the grace that has been poured out on us by God through faith in Christ produces this transformation.

What we need to recognize is that this is not an optional result. It is not as if we can be saved and demonstrate zero sustaining transformation. It will occur, the believer will be transformed, it is not left to chance, it is not entirely dependent on our abilities but rather on the person and work of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit as He does what Christ promises He will do as He speaks to His disciples on the night before He goes to the cross. In John 14 Jesus, speaking to His disciples says these words John 14:16–17 ““And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, that He may be with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.” John 14:21 ““He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”” John 14:23–26 “Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him. “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me. “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” Notice the things that are stated by Jesus as being sureties; 1. another Advocate will come (the Holy Spirit) to believers not the whole world, 2. The Advocate, or the Holy Spirit, will abide in you, 3. Our love for Christ will produce obedience, 4. The Advocate will teach us all things concerning Christ, and 5. The Advocate WILL bring to remembrance the truths of Scripture. These are the things that absolutely will occur, done by the groom for and to the bride.

Even as He imputes His righteousness to us, even as the Father declares us just, He determines not to leave us in that place. He enables us through the work of the Spirit to be obedient, to understand His truths, to live according to His commands. In the world in which we live there is massive resistance, even within the confines of those who profess to know Christ, against this, using the arguments that to profess/claim/call/demand that the people of God live Holy lives (which requires us to live according to His

commands, which is by definition obedience) undermines the foundation of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. Whereas the truth of scripture boldly and completely declares that because you are saved, because you are transformed, because you have had the heart of stone removed and a heart of flesh installed, because you are a new creation in Christ, because you are dead to sin and alive to Christ, YOU WILL ABSOLUTELY LIVE LIVES THAT ARE OBEDIENT!! You desire holiness, it is your aim, it is your goal and you walk in that with the full knowledge and understanding that it is not YOU who is accomplishing this, but the Holy Spirit... that it is done through the transformation that He brings, the sanctification that comes from what He does within, from the transformation that He has caused.

Three Actions of Holy Living

Which brings us back to the three things that we see Peter identifying in verse 13.

Notice he says here first that a believer's mind has been girded for action. Hopefully this word girded, at the very least tickles the back of your mind, but hopefully brings forth an image. Recall that God commanded the Israelites as they were preparing for the first Passover that they were to eat the meal with their loins girded. To gird your loins was done in preparation of action. The men of the day would wear long flowing robes and so when they would go into battle or begin a long journey, they would gird up their loins, literally they would reach down and grab the rear hem of their robe, pull it up between their legs and tuck it into their belt creating something similar to pants which allowed them freedom to move around. Of course this is not what Peter is talking about here but it does help convey the idea that we need to understand. I also want you to note that this is past tense, the assumption of Peter is that this is something that you have already done. To be clear here, Peter is talking to believers, to the church, not to unbelievers, and his expectation of believers is to already have done this preparatory work. This work that they have already done is prepared their mind, they have mentally made themselves ready for action, for service, for that which they have been called.

This is not a call to sit on the sideline until you become an expert, this is a person who has come to faith because of the work of the Holy Spirit

together with the proclamation of the good news, has repented and believed. This can only be done with an understanding of what God's word says, both about the true nature of God, the truth of Jesus Christ and the reality of who we are as creatures. This also means that there is continual preparation that occurs, we are called to study, to renew, to not conform, to ensure that we continue to take in the God-breathed word as Paul described it to Timothy. Knowing and taking in this word allows us to see how the entire counsel of God's word is profitable for our very lives. This is what Peter means when he says "having your minds girded". That they are prepared for the spiritual battles that lay ahead, that we have spent time in the word of God, in prayer and communion with God and that we are moving forward in faith that is built and resting on that knowledge.

Second, we are called to be sober in spirit. This particular statement and the use of the English word sober has caused this passage to be somewhat misinterpreted over the years. The call here is as Calvin states is one of us pursuing

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spiritual sobriety, when all our thoughts and affections are so kept as not to be inebriated with the allurements of this world. For since even the least taste of them stealthily draws us away from God, when one plunges himself into these, he must necessarily become sleepy and stupid, and he forgets God and the things of God.

The word that is here translated as sober can also be translated self-control. The idea that is being conveyed by Peter here is that even as we have our minds girded or prepared for action we still live with attention. One of the great dangers in the the life of a believer can be in our approach to the things of God, becoming apathetic if you will. We get into a place where we feel like we have heard or read the same words a thousand times, the preacher has preached the same message, we sang the same songs, etc. and the Christian life becomes a life of habit where we may still do all of the things that we are "supposed" to be doing but we do them in a manner like that of the church at Ephesus, where we fall under that same indictment of Christ that we find in Revelation 2:2-4 "I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot bear with those who are evil, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, you also have not grown weary. 'But I have this against

you, that you have left your first love." They are doing the deeds, but they are doing them habitually. Spurgeon commented on this call of sober mindedness or self-control:

1 Peter Exposition

Live with your eyes open; do not go about the world half asleep. Many Christians are asleep. Whole congregations are asleep.

As a Christian, living a holy life means that while we are diligently ensuring that our minds are prepared, we are also diligently living out the life God has called us to live and that Christ provides for His bride.

Finally, Peter's exhortation to "*fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*" stands at the heart of the Christian's call to holy living. Too often in modern evangelistic methods, we present only half of the gospel—emphasizing forgiveness of sin without equally proclaiming the transforming power of the Holy Spirit that moves believers from self-ruled lives to Christ-ruled lives. When we fail to hold these truths together, we inadvertently create the impression that God is indifferent to how His people live, so long as they profess faith. But Peter's words confront this dangerous reduction. The call to holiness is weighty because it is grounded in a hope that reorients the entire life.

To *fix your hope completely* means to anchor all expectation of final joy, security, and fulfillment not in one's obedience, merit, or spiritual progress, but in the unearned grace that God promises to reveal when Christ returns. Spurgeon captures this beautifully: the believer must not hope in his own works, nor in the grace already experienced, but in "*the grace that will be brought to you.*" God has already placed this grace "on the road," Spurgeon says; it is coming with Christ like a chariot filled with "unutterable love and infinite joy." This forward-looking grace includes the consummation of salvation—what Peter describes earlier as "*a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1:5). Justification and sanctification are already ours, but perfection—of soul and body—awaits the appearing of our Lord.

This eschatological hope also shapes the identity and preparation of the Bride of Christ. As traced in the Old Testament imagery, the people of God have always been called to live as a betrothed bride awaiting her groom. The incarnation secured our belonging to Christ; His righteousness clothes us; His Spirit produces a life of holiness in us; and His return will consummate the union. Thus, fixing our hope on future grace does not

weaken present obedience—it fuels it. For the Bride who knows her Groom is coming lives now in the purity, longing, and joyful expectation that reflect the certainty of that promised grace.

Conclusion

As we draw our thoughts together this morning, we must return to the central thread woven through every text we have examined—from Zechariah’s prophetic praise, to Peter’s exhortation to a scattered church, to the promises of Christ Himself: **God saves a people in order to make them holy.** The first advent inaugurated this work through the incarnation of Christ; the second advent will consummate it when the Bride is finally presented in radiant splendor. Between these two advents lies our present calling—not a calling to earn salvation, but a calling that *flows from* salvation. Holiness is not the requirement of the gospel but the inevitable result of the gospel. The Bride who has been redeemed cannot remain unchanged; the Bride clothed in Christ’s righteousness cannot cling to the garments of her former lusts; the Bride betrothed to the King cannot live as though she still belongs to another master.

Peter’s command is clear and unavoidable: **"Be holy yourselves also in all your conduct."** This holiness is grounded in a mind prepared for action, a spirit that remains sober and awake, and a hope fixed completely—not partially, not half-heartedly—on the grace that awaits us when Christ returns. That future grace strengthens present obedience; that promised consummation fuels current transformation; that coming glory compels us not to drift, not to slumber, not to treat lightly the call to walk in righteousness all our days.

The Bridegroom is coming. His first coming secured your redemption; His second will reveal your glory. And so the question that confronts each of us—the question that cannot be avoided—is this: **If Christ has made you His own, are you living now as the Bride He is preparing for Himself?**

Closing Prayer

Gracious Father,
We come before You humbled by the weight of Your Word and the beauty of Your promises. You have redeemed us with the precious blood of Christ,

called us out of darkness, and set Your Spirit within us so that we might walk in Your ways. Lord, do not allow these truths to drift from our minds or lie dormant in our hearts. Awaken us where we have grown dull; steady us where we have become distracted; convict us where sin still clings too closely.

Teach us to fix our hope fully on the grace that is coming with Christ, and let that hope shape our steps today. Make us a people who long for holiness—not as a burden, but as the joyful evidence of belonging to our Savior. Strengthen our resolve, sharpen our minds, and deepen our love, that we may live as a Bride being prepared for her King. Work in us by Your Spirit, through Your Word, and for Your glory.
In Christ's holy name we pray, Amen.