

## **Cultivating Godliness**

*1 Peter 3:8-12; May 17, 2020*

### **Introduction:**

Good morning RHC. I'm Jon Chasteen and I serve as a pastor here at RHC. Before we jump into the text today I just wanted to share a way you can be praying for me and my family. Some of you are aware of this, but June 1 will be 10 years since we moved to Medford to help start with RHC. It's a been a great 10 years because God is great God. Well, RHC is blessing me and my family with an 11 week sabbatical this summer. The primary goals for this season are vocational rest, personal rest and family renewal. We'll be starting this on June 20 and it will go through the very beginning September. Pray for us as we prepare for this season and for God to use it to strengthen me and my family for another long stretch with RHC.

In our passage today, we're going to talk about cultivating godliness in our lives. Peter has already given us number of reasons why godliness matters (cf. 1:17-18; 2:11-12), but let's focus in on two verses:

*but as **he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct**, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV)*

- God is holy and we now belong to him so we should be holy.
- Our pursuit of holiness and godliness is in response to his "calling."
- He has made us alive in Jesus and our response is to love him with all of our life.
- What does godliness look like? Our text gives us some answers today.

### **Read 1 Peter 3:8-12**

#### **The Main Point: Cultivate Godliness to Experience the Blessed Life**

- "Finally, all of you..."
  - Peter brings the section that started in 2:11-12 to a close by now giving us all traits of godliness.

#### **A few initial thoughts on godliness before we jump into the text:**

- The source of power for godliness is the Holy Spirit within us but we also have a responsibility on our part (cf. 1 Tim. 4:7; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:29).
  - Jerry Bridges calls this "dependent discipline." "He works as we work, and we are able to work because He is at work in us" (Jerry Bridges).
- We grow in our character every day. The question is: in which direction are we growing?

### **I. Cultivate Godliness in the Church (8).**

- First, we're going to see that Peter focuses on cultivating godliness in your relationships in the church (3:8).
- Peter lists five adjectives which come across as commands for areas believers are to

cultivate godliness.

### **Unity of Mind (Be Harmonious)**

- This was one of the main focuses of Jesus' prayer in John 17:20-21: "that they may all be one."
- The call to unity is a common call for the church in the NT (cf. Rom. 12:16; 15:5; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 2:1-2; Eph. 4:1-6). We are one body with many members and we're all different. This is the beauty and power of the gospel.
- Why do we find some may commands for unity in the NT?
  - We are prone to suffer from division and dissension.
  - Satan would love to see fighting, divisions and dissension at RHC.
  - If we're fighting inwardly, we're not moving the mission forward and making any difference in the kingdom of darkness.
- What does it mean to live in unity?
  - It doesn't mean having the same opinion on every subject.
  - It does mean being united in pursuit of the same goal.
    - RHC Mission Statement
  - One of the best solutions to disunity is to pray together.
- What hinders unity?
  - Pride...which is why we find humility later on in this list.

### **Sympathy**

- Sympathy means caring deeply about the needs, joys and sorrows of others.

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (Romans 12:15 ESV)*

*If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (1 Corinthians 12:26 ESV)*

- What hinders sympathy?
  - You can't be selfish and sympathetic at the same time.
  - You've got to spend time with others in order to grow in sympathy.
  - If you don't know what others are going through, how can you care about their needs joys and sorrows?
- What cultivates sympathy?
  - Spend time with others in community and pray for God to increase your concern and care for others.
  - Father, help me to care about the needs of others, including those that are difficult for me to relate with and care for.
- Personal Example:
  - This is an area that the Spirit of God has convicted me over in the past week. Last week was a hard week for her (a foster child in our home transitioned; snow; stuck at home, etc.) I've been so focused on my needs, wants and desires that I

wasn't very sympathetic with my her. So what did I do? The other night, I confessed my sin to her. I asked her to forgive me. I asked God to help me grow in sympathy.

### **Brotherly and Sisterly Love (Be affectionate)**

- In the NT, the image of siblinghood, being brothers and sisters in Christ, is the primary descriptor for how men and women partner in the church.
- Peter has mentioned this a few times already (cf. 1:22; 2:17).
- We ought to have the kind of love for each other that is reserved for brothers and sisters.
- If there's one thing that should describe followers of Jesus, it should be their love for each other (cf. Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-7).

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35 ESV)*

- In fact, one commentator even notes, "A nonloving Christian is a contradiction of terms" (Robert Mounce; cf. 1 John 3:14).
- Our relationships should be characterized by sacrificial love. Love gives whatever the cost. Love sacrifices in order to forgive. Love honors and cares.

### **Compassion (Have a tender heart)**

- Compassion means being moved and stirred with concern for sufferings of others. It's similar to sympathy (cf. Eph. 4:32; Phil. 1:8; 2:1; Col. 3:12).

*But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? (1 John 3:17 ESV)*

- Father, soften and open my heart to be moved by the cares of those around me.

### **Humility**

- Humility before God; humility towards his Word; humility with our own gifts and abilities; humility towards others (cf. Eph. 4:1-3; Rom. 12:16; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 5:5).

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4 ESV)*

- What hinders humility?
  - Pride

*Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (1 Pet.*

5:5 ESV)

Imagine the result and impact of the people of God cultivating these virtues and living them out!

- As we dream about multiplying 30 leaders this year at RHC, these are traits leaders should be increasingly cultivating.
- As we dream about multiplying new Groups this year at RHC, these are the traits that are going to lead to healthy God-glorifying groups.

Imagine the church as a window for Greater Medford to see the power of the gospel and beauty of God.

Now, Peter turns his focus to how we cultivate godliness among those outside the church and in particular among those who might inflict evil on us (3:9-12).

## II. Cultivate Godliness in the World (9).

- Verse 9 moves to address how believers should respond when we are mistreated and face persecution (a central theme of 1 Peter).
- Let's be honest, our natural instinct is retaliate and fight back: "You hurt me so I'm going to hurt you."
- We addressed this theme back when we looked at servants and master in 1 Peter 2:18-25 and how Jesus responded to evil and reviling.
- The way you respond to evil and reviling is an opportunity to display the mercy of God.

*But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:44-45 ESV)*

- Don't Retaliate (put off)
  - Cf. Lk. 6:27-35; Rom. 12:17; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Cor. 4:11-13
- Bless (put on)
  - What does it mean to bless (cf. Rom. 12:14, 20-21)?
    - It means to ask God to show his favor even upon those who have done them evil and to desire good, not evil for them.
- Ills:
  - This past October, social media was a buzz with a young man's decision to forgive.
  - Amber Guyger, an off-duty police officer in Dallas, entered the apartment of Botham Jean, a 26 year-old accountant. She later said she thought it was her own apartment and mistook Botham for a burglar, shooting and killing him.
  - One year later she was sentenced to 10 years in prison and Botham's brother, Brandt, directly addressed Amber saying:

*"If you truly are sorry, I can speak for myself, I forgive and I know if you go to God and ask him,*

*he will forgive you....And I'm not gonna say I hope you rot and die just like my brother did but I presently want the best for you....And the best would be to give your life to Christ... Again I love you as a person and I don't wish anything bad on you."*

### **III. Cultivate Godliness to Experience the Blessed Life (10-12).**

- The reasons Peter gives in verse 9 for cultivating godliness:
  - We've been called to this (cf. Eph. 4:1)
  - So that we might "obtain a blessing." What is this blessing? Check out Psalm 34
- The context of Ps. 34
  - It's a psalm on suffering and the Lord's deliverance of those who are afflicted, an issue directly facing the churches Peter was writing to.
- Here's what Peter wants us to see:

#### **The ungodly will face God's judgment and curse.**

- "But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil"
- The very next line in Ps. 34 says that the wicked will be destroyed by God.
- Those who practice evil will not obtain an eternal inheritance and favor and blessing from God.

#### **The godly will receive God's blessing.**

- Godliness is essential to experience God's blessing.
  - God's blessing:
    - "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous"
    - "...and his ears are open to their prayer."
  - Additional areas for pursuing godliness:
    - Speech (cf. 2:11; James 3:1-12; Matt. 12:33-37)
    - Turn away from evil (avoid it at all costs)
    - Do good
    - Seek and pursue peace with your whole heart (cf. Matt. 5:9).
- Peter isn't proposing a works-based salvation.
  - A life of godliness is evidence that we are truly alive in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:3-6).
- Peter is not suggesting that we will live perfectly.
  - But there should be increasing evidence over time of godliness.
  - If there's no evidence of increasing godliness or obedience in our lives, the Scriptures say we should examine ourselves to see if we are really in the faith.
- What is God's blessing?
  - This blessing is eternal life that begins now and the "inheritance" that will be ours when Jesus returns (cf. 1:4, 13).
    - "Whoever desires to love life and see good days"
      - This doesn't mean that God will keep the godly from suffering but that he will provide strength and grace to endure it.

*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. (Psalm 34:8-11 ESV)*

## **Conclusion**

- I want to leave you with two encouragements:
  - Ask the Holy Spirit to impress upon your mind the one or two traits that he wants you to work on this week. Concentrate on these. Later on, the Spirit will lead you to work on others.
  - Memorize one verse or passage this week on that trait of godliness.
- If you've been listening today and you realize there's very little godliness in your life. It might be because you need God to change your heart. It's impossible to please God apart from new life in Jesus. You can commit your life to Jesus today. If that's something you want to do...
  - Text the word "JESUS" to the number on the screen or in the comments sections.
  - If you're in our Church Online platform click "Raise Hand" to commit to follow Jesus and then select "Request Prayer" so that we can celebrate and pray with you.

## **Pray**