

## Holy Living

1 Peter 1:12-2:3

Well, it seems that most of the snow and ice has now cleared, at least for now. This is much to the disappointment of many school children who have to go back to school, and much to the delight of people who have struggled to get into work for the last week. The remaining ice has continued to cause problems on the roads though. You may have noticed that there are pot holes appearing everywhere you go, some roads have still been slippery towards the curbs, and one motorway in Oldham, black ice caused a pileup involving about 10 cars and injuring at least seven people.

The problem with icy weather is that you can't always see things clearly. For a start, you have to scrape the ice off your window and you see many people driving around with a tiny patch scrapped away. But even when you do scrape the windows properly, sometimes you find that as you're driving down the road, the window mists up again and you so you still can't see properly. Even when you can see out of your windows properly, sometimes the snow and icy can make things look very different to how they actually are...

*[clip of car driving into water that looks like tarmac]*

Our passage this evening starts with "Therefore..." Rick Warren says that whenever we see the word 'Therefore' we should look back to see what the 'therefore' is 'there for'.

Richard spoke about this last Sunday morning. If we just remind ourselves of the context of this passage, in verse 10-12 Peter talks about our salvation:

<sup>10</sup>Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, <sup>11</sup>trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

In the first verse of our passage for tonight, Peter says:

"Therefore prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed."

In the TNIV it says:

"...with minds that are alert and fully sober..."

In the earlier verses of the book (10-12) Peter says that the Christians he is writing to have heard the gospel, it has been preached to them and presumably he is writing to them because they are now part of the church after accepting this gospel and responding to it. They have come to know and accept the truth about Jesus Christ. Peter compares this with living in ignorance. It is as though Peter is saying, "now you have come to your senses and can see things clearly", or "now your eyes have been opened..." The mist has cleared from the windows, the ice has thawed and we can see things as they really are.

We need to be alert and sober to make proper judgements. Often on a person's will you will find the phrase; "being of sound mind". In other words the person knew what they were signing. If this is shown not to be the case, the will is deemed invalid.

There are many who think that Christians live in a fantasy world but Peter says no, it's the Christians who have come to know the truth. Others live in a fantasy world, in ignorance, not realising where their life is heading. Peter is not only talking hypothetically, he has a real and specific situation in mind; the people he is writing to.

He talks about an EMPTY way of life handed down to them by their ancestors. But Peter also reminds them that they have now come away from that, they no longer live in ignorance but as people who know the truth of the living hope we have in Jesus.

Peter also raises some challenges that are worth thinking about. His challenge is to "be holy". This was instructions given to the Israelites (God's chosen / called people). Peter reminds us that we are part of the called people and so this also applies to us. We are the people of God and Peter's challenge is that we should act like the people of God. There are three good reasons that Peter gives as to why we should seek to live holy lives.

### **1. Because we no longer live in ignorance**

- a. There was a man interviewed on The One Show this week who has refused to do jury service and is now facing the threat of going to prison himself because of his refusal to serve. One complication that came up on the program was the plea that so many people make for 'diminished responsibility'. I have actually been called up for jury service twice. The second time I got out of it because it was so close to the first time. The case was a very gruesome murder case. The man who carried out the murders did not deny it but he was appealing for a reduced sentence on the grounds of diminished responsibility.
- b. On the evidence presented, the jury decided that the man's actions were carried out in full consciousness, he was not granted diminished responsibility
- c. And neither will we be. Peter says we no longer live in ignorance – there has been a transition, out of darkness into light, out of ignorance into an awareness of the truth. For us, saying "I didn't know what I was doing" is not a valid excuse. We are responsible for our own actions; the things that we do, and perhaps even more scarily, the things that we don't do.

### **2. Because you have a Father who judges each person's work impartially**

- a. This week history has been made in the British legal system as the first major criminal trial without a jury for more than 400 years got underway. The trial started at the Royal Courts of Justice on Tuesday and concerns four men who are being tried for an armed robbery carried out at a warehouse at Heathrow in February 2004.

Apparently this is the fourth time that the case has been brought to court and has already cost taxpayers £24m. The reason that the court has now decided to try the case without a jury is due to jury tampering which caused the last trial to be abandoned.

- b. God is impartial, he is not swayed by others.
- c. When a court case begins, the jury are asked to put anything they may have heard about the case (e.g. on the news) out of their minds. They are asked to try the defendant ONLY on the evidence that is presented during the court case. In high

profile cases, the jury may be put up in a hotel so as other people cannot influence their verdict.

- d. In a court you get lawyers who each try to persuade the jury with clever words and clever ways of presenting the evidence. It is possible that a guilty person can get off if their lawyer gives a convincing enough argument.
- e. There is no such system when we stand before the judge of the world. He cannot be bribed, he cannot be persuaded, he judges impartially and fairly.

So far it all sounds a bit 'doom and gloom'. What about this 'living hope' that Peter talked about earlier? Well, that's the golden nugget in these verses.

### **3. Because we have been bought at a very high cost**

- a. Illustration of thief and the high court judge. They were once best friends and one day the thief is brought in front of the judge. The judge has to pass sentence and fines his friend £10,000. Then he takes out his cheque book and writes a cheque for £10,000.
- b. We have been redeemed at a great cost, we ought to be grateful and live remembering the price that Jesus paid for us to be free.

#### **How do we do this?**

- c. Peter says our model is God. "Be holy as I am holy". It's a tall order so how do we 'be holy'?
  - i. Remember first of all that we have the example of Jesus Christ. Peter says he is the lamb without blemish or defect. In other words he is perfect. If we are to aim for perfection, this is it. He is the standard. We have limited records of the life of Jesus but it is enough for us to see the kind of person that Jesus was, the sort of things he did, what he said. We have an example to model ourselves on.
  - ii. Peter gives some practical instruction. First of all we should have sincere and deep love for one another. If God is love then so should we be.
    1. Why? Because we have been born again. We are different now, no longer children of the world but children of God. The way of the world is to bicker and fight, to tear holes in one another. You only have to tune into the parliament channel to see people tearing one another apart. Sadly, the church is viewed in the same way from many outside. A common observance is that the church fights and argues among themselves. Denominations argue over doctrine and practice. The sad fact of the matter is that many Christians have more problems with their brothers and sisters of other denominations who share the faith we have in Jesus Christ than with those who are apposed to the faith we share. – this is a bad witness to the world, we should be united in love for one another.
    2. We should rid ourselves of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander. – these are patterns of the world, they are not consistent with holiness. They are pollutants in the holy people of God and need to be got rid of.
    3. Instead crave pure spiritual milk. It's interesting that Peter says this is the way to grow up.
      - a. Once we have tasted that the Lord is good, we will surely want more and more of Him. Like a baby craves the mother's milk. Are you hungry for God?

Challenge:

If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Let us seek to “Be Holy as [God is] Holy”