

Live a Holy Life Set Apart for God

DARRELL DELANEY

Every surgeon uses tools that have been sterilized and set aside specifically for each procedure. The medical team goes through a painstaking process to make sure that these tools are not used for any other purpose, and not even touched by hands without gloves once they are cleaned. Even the surgeons have a handwashing process to make sure they do not contaminate the materials. The process of being set apart for a specific purpose is something every Christian should know about, for it is the very concept of holiness. We have a holy God, who has set apart for his divine purposes his people. In this episode of *Groundwork*, we are going to talk about how the concepts of holiness, salvation, and being purified for God's purposes can help us to be a blessing to everyone we come into contact with. Stay tuned.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are in episode two of our 1 and 2 Peter series. We've got an eight-parter here. We are going to do five episodes on the 1 Peter section, and then three episodes on 2 Peter; and we learned in the first episode that God is our living hope—Christ is our living hope; and that hope can repurpose pain and suffering in trials.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; two of the three themes in this whole letter came up in those first twelve verses that we looked at in the previous program. We have a new identity, and that new identity gets lived out in the context of suffering, and they were suffering a lot. We think that by the time, later in the 1st Century, that Peter was writing this first letter and his second letter, it may have been the time of persecution under Emperor Nero.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Who was a bad, bad guy. He was a very evil guy who used Christians as scapegoats. When there was a fire in Rome that he himself may have been partially to blame to cause, he blamed it on the Christians. He found very creative ways to make Christians suffer and to kill them. So, Nero and the Roman Empire at the time was a context of great suffering. So, Peter had to talk about that to these Christians who were scattered in Asia Minor; and that is a major theme of this: How do we make sense of suffering; how do we maintain our hope in suffering?

DARRELL DELANEY

And knowing that they were going through those things you know the threat on their life was very real; and so, Peter directs them to look at Christ, and let them know that they have hope in a Savior who has been there and understands that, and actually ended up dying for the cause of the Father's will to the kingdom to be made known to everyone; and he was put to death as well. The fact that he is resurrected, he has given us a new hope and strength and encouragement; and Christ can do that because he knows that. For those people...people right now who are feeling like they are going through a lot of suffering and pain for the

cause of Christ, in difficulties and the brokenness of this world, we do have a Comforter with a capital C, named Christ, who by the power of his Spirit has given us everything we need to be encouraged, and he has given us believers around us as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; he gives us Jesus as our *ultimate* comfort in life and in death; but he gives us other people, he gives us his Holy Spirit as well.

So, now that Peter has made clear that he wants to have people understand that, he also needs to move on to something else that we need to talk about, and that is *holiness*. So, here is 1 Peter 1:13:

Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, ¹⁶for it is written: “Be holy because I am holy.”

That is a line from Leviticus.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, it is. Peter wants them to know it is not a time to just sit around on your thumbs, or just pontificate about your faith and just pray and wait. No; this is a time for some action. We are called to set our hope on the future grace that will occur when Christ returns. You know that is the Second Advent, when Christ comes back. We are called to that; and it is actually something that is active and not passive.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and by the way, we mentioned in the first program that although Peter is addressing this letter, we think, mainly to Gentiles—to non-Jews—he addresses them as though they are Jews. Just like he was talking to Israel or to Jewish people; and another thing he does here...and we will see it in a couple of other parts of this program and in future programs...Peter peppers this letter with a lot of Old Testament quotes. So, here we are in Leviticus, where we get that concept of holiness. It is the Hebrew word *kadosh*, and *kadosh* is anything that is unique, that is set aside, that is set apart. God is the ultimate *kadosh*...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

He is the unique God. He is utterly separate from all of this world. He is *holy*; and in Leviticus, we are called to be holy as God is holy, which is a tall order, by the way. We could never do it, and Israel certainly never achieved it. We can only do it by the Spirit, but we are set aside for a specific purpose, and that means there are certain things you cannot do.

You know...Leviticus...I remember a pastor one time did a whole series on Leviticus, where he basically asked the question: What difference does it make if God lives with us every moment of our lives? And what Leviticus says is: If you want to live with God every moment of your life, it is going to affect everything: the clothing you are supposed to wear; what you eat and don't eat; where you go and where you don't go. Everything is affected by living in the presence of God to be set apart.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, God is calling us to live the way he lives, and to behave the way he behaves. It is in his DNA, if you will, to be holy because that is who he is; and what we do is an extension of that; and we are called to live this new life. I feel like it is a spiritual transfusion, where Christ's death and atonement has actually changed our spiritual blood for his, and now we live a different life. Peter is saying: Don't revert back to what you did before, but live a new life in light of what God has done for you. He has set you apart for a holy purpose.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, I like that idea. A couple of friends of mine have had stem cell replacement to fight leukemia or cancer; and you know, the funny thing is, when you have a stem cell replacement and you have a donor for the new stem cells, you get a new blood type...

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I mean, your blood type changes. I mean, they call it a birthday because it is like you are not the same person on the inside you were before. You have had a complete change, almost at the cellular level, and that is what I think you were just saying: We get that transplant of Jesus into us and it changes everything in our lives.

DARRELL DELANEY

And we are called to live in light of that truth, which is why it is actually ridiculous and pointless to go back to the old way of doing things that got us into this trouble in the first place. We are completely, fundamentally, spiritually speaking, a new person—a new creation; and that identity piece is a lot of what we talked about in the first episode. That is one of his first themes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are all new people. You are very simply all new people. He said you lived in ignorance once, right? You didn't know better when you are partying, when you were worshipping false gods; you were doing all kinds of stuff...evil desires. You cannot do that when you are a set-apart people, because if you participate in everything the culture does, you are not set apart; you are enmeshed in it.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The trick is to live in this world but not be of the world, you know; we have heard that line many times: You live in the world but you cannot be of the world, because otherwise you are not going to be holy and set apart. So, now that you are a new person, you know that Jesus is Lord; not the emperor, not anybody else; not the president; not your boss. Jesus is Lord, and you can only say that by the Holy Spirit.

DARRELL DELANEY

And when Peter is calling these people who read this passage to hold unswervingly to their faith in Christ, he is saying: Your allegiance is to God and God alone; everyone else comes underneath that. And it will cause you to fundamentally live and behave in a different way; and as believers, our faith is our most precious gift; and coming up next, we are going to talk about just why that is. So, stay tuned.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are in 1 Peter, and we have been talking about the importance of living holy, and in a set-apart way. Holiness is not only a designation of godly character, but it is the practical way that we live out our faith; and it goes stark contrast to the way the world does things, which is why Peter is reminding them not to go back into the ways that they used to go. So, when you do that, you stand for Christ in a way, even if you get opposition for it. It is still the right thing to do.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; and you know, Christians in the 1st Century...early Church Christians...they struggled the same as anybody. You know, both Paul and Peter, in their letters...and I think you actually get it in almost all the letters...you get it in James, you get it in John's epistles...there is just enough of a common theme that comes up often: Don't go back living the way you were. This must have happened, or they wouldn't have to warn people, right? There must have been a lot of peer pressure in Greco-Roman society to go with the flow: Come on; come to the party; come to the Bacchanalia; come to the orgy. Live a little.

DARRELL DELANEY

Worship idols, yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; live a little. This must have actually been a problem or they wouldn't have warned against it so often. Everybody struggles with those kinds of temptations, but if you are going to be set apart...kadosh...if you are going to be holy as God is holy, then you cannot mix it up with the world in just that way.

DARRELL DELANEY

And the way to do that, Scott, is to prioritize the most precious gift that we currently have, and that is our faith; and Peter talks about that in the next set of verses. He says: ^{1:17}Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. ¹⁸For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; what were you redeemed with? Money, gold, silver? No. You were redeemed with the most precious commodity the universe has ever known, and that is the blood of God's incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. That shed blood on the cross...God's Son...God's Son came to the world, and we killed him, but God had a purpose in it: Salvation; and life came through, paradoxically, death. So, the most precious thing in the world we could ever conceive of, Peter is saying, is the shed blood of the Lamb—the ultimate Lamb of God—who is Jesus Christ. That is what bought you. Don't you ever forget that. Don't you ever forget what it cost Jesus to buy you. That is what *redeem* means, right?

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You were bought with *that* price. Why would you want to turn back to your former way of life? That would be a sign of profound ignorance and deep, deep ingratitude.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, it would. So, the Apostle Peter is talking about this lamb. The blood of Christ is the Lamb without blemish or defect. You mentioned earlier, not only in this episode, but in the previous episode, that he is talking to the gentile believers, the majority of them, in the way that he would speak to the Jewish ones, who understand this sacrificial system that the entire Old Testament was built upon, but he is saying it so that they know that this was a very precious...very precious gift. It cannot be replaced. The most expensive gift; and that gift is the blood of Christ that actually is atoning for the sins of the whole world; and Peter is making sure that they know that that is important; that we have been redeemed and bought back.

I was thinking about how I used to go to the grocery store with my grandmother as a kid, and how she would have a whole bag of coupons; and I was like: Come on, Grandma; we gotta leave. And she is like: No; we are

going to save some money today; and so, every time they scanned it, she even got some things that were free because the whole coupon paid for everything. What Peter is saying in this passage is that the coupon is Christ's death and atonement on the cross that pays for a new life that we now live in; and it doesn't make sense to throw it away and go back to what we were doing, because it has a new purpose. It is really powerful.

Scott Hoezee:

The source of deep, deep, deep encouragement, and your faith and hope, he says there in verse 21, are in God. And that salvation that we get, Darrell, that was bought with that precious blood of the Lamb.

You know...okay, now you have salvation, but it is not like a trophy you put up on the shelf, right? It is not something that is just kind of dead and dormant. Peter wants to make clear this has ongoing implications. So, here is verse 22 of 1 Peter 1:

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring Word of God. ²⁴For, (here is a quote) "All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ³⁵but the Word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the Word that was preached to you.

Darrell Delaney:

You know what is beautiful is that when you first started reading that, I saw that Peter threw that bonus in that said that obeying the truth somehow purifies us; and I love that because, you know, a lot of us do a lot of striving, and we follow a lot of rules and we think it is about Xs and Os and dos and don'ts, and it is not. It is really about embracing the truth of the gospel that we are sinners saved by grace through faith, and that is the God who loves us, and that obeying the truth of repenting and serving him, that purifies us somehow in the back end. That is powerful!

Scott Hoezee:

And Peter makes it very clear this leads to love; Love each other...love each other deeply from the heart; and you love each other by serving each other; and you have to believe, Darrell, that Peter was remembering that time in the upper room memorialized for us in John Chapter 13...

Darrell Delaney: Yes.

Scott Hoezee: When Jesus is going to wash the disciples' feet. When he gets to Peter, Peter says: No way! You are the Master. You do not wash *my* feet. And Jesus says: Well, if I don't wash your feet, then you can have no part of me. The Peter says: Well, then, let's do the whole thing: Wash my head...pour... No, no, no; your feet will be good enough; but Jesus was setting an example. In fact, we call it Maundy Thursday...Maundy from *mandatum*, which means a command. ³⁴"A new command I give you: (This is John 13) Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Peter was surely thinking about that here when he wrote these words.

Darrell Delaney:

He says: Love one another deeply from the heart, and you have to believe he has that in the back of his mind, how not only did Christ wash his feet, but Christ redeemed him, came back and got him after he had denied Jesus three times; and so, he has his own personal testimony, but now he knows that he can encourage those who are going through intense persecution right now under the Emperor Nero and the Roman government, that they do not have to renounce God. They can hold onto this truth that he is a redeemer. He is a shield and he can give us inexpressible joy in the midst of trials.

Scott Hoezee:

And it is the living and enduring Word of God, Peter says, that lives in you. You know, Paul writes, too, somewhere: Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, right? That word, that is the seed that grows, he says. It is an imperishable, eternal seed; and so, we want to start letting that grow in us. We want to love each other. We don't want to be vengeful people, or keep a record of wrongs. We want to love; we want to forgive even as we know we need to be forgiven; and this, Peter says...this proves to the world that you are Jesus', because you love like Jesus loved.

Let's think as we close the program, Darrell, a little bit about a few practical applications for all this. So, stay tuned.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*; and Scott, we have covered a lot of ground already, and this is only the end of Chapter 1.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

There is plenty more to come in the next parts of this series, and I am looking forward to it, but before we wrap up this episode, we want to set the stage for Chapter 2, where we have some practical takeaways as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, Peter has made it clear that we are called to live a holy life; that we are called to love each other deeply; make sure that with your faith the rubber hits the road—your faith has to be active. It is not just something to look at or talk about. We have to do something; and so, Chapter 2 of 1 Peter begins: Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ²Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

DARRELL DELANEY

Scott, I love that he started with *therefore*. I was taught in Bible college that when I see the word *therefore*, you have to go back before the word *therefore* to see what it is there for. So, it is really crazy because everything is contingent upon what we just read in Chapter 1, and what we have been talking about in the first part of this episode and the last episode, that we have a living hope in Christ. He has saved us, given us a new identity. We can have that hope in the midst of suffering, and that hope in the enduring word whether we get it in Bible studies or preaching or our own quiet times, it is strengthening us. Therefore, in light of all that, here is how we live; and we have a certain way that we live now.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And so, when you are holy, as God is holy, when you live out your faith, there are things you actively do; there are activities you engage in; but Peter reminds us here, and Paul does this, too, there are also things you have to get rid of, right? So, there are positive things you do, and there are negative things you have to get rid of, and he has a list of five here: Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander. I am sure this could be a longer list, but I suspect, Darrell, that Peter chose those because each of them would be the opposite of the love and the holiness he has been talking about.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; I feel like he probably was doing the contrast of these things. These are things that are not loving...negative command: Do not do these things; let go of these and lay ahold of these; but also, it could be some of the things that he may have been hearing that have been happening and circulating in the churches in Asia Minor. You know, malice is when you intentionally want to harm someone just for the sake of it; and then, you know, deceit is when you give someone a false impression, and you make them think something when it really isn't, which is close to hypocrisy, which basically I am putting a fake face on and making you think I am somebody that I am not.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And envy, of course...closely linked to pride...envy is when somebody is better than you and so you want to take them down a few pegs so you don't feel so bad; and that leads to anger and resentment; and slander, of course, is just lying...speaking ill of somebody...trying to ruin someone's reputation. Actually, envious people do this all the time: Oh, yeah, yeah; she makes a good apple pie, but boy, I hear her marriage is not so good. So, the person we compete with in life we want to bring down a few pegs, and slander is a great way to

do that. All of these things are not loving, and they cannot be part of a holy people. This is how the world works. People are like this all the time. We see it all the time, but if you are going to be a set-apart, holy people, as Peter has said, then you cannot participate in that.

DARRELL DELANEY

We are called to move away from those things; and when we begin to renounce and get rid of those out of our lives, we actually make room for God to be able to use us in a way that honors his name and testifies, even in the midst of hard times, that the light can shine. So, when we make room for the Holy Spirit to operate in our life, it is because we are actively going against those things that we know we are not called to.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, we get rid of that, but then, what do we want to have? Pure spiritual milk, and that is an interesting image there, Darrell.

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, spiritual milk. I like that the Word is actually likened to spiritual milk. I have a new nephew. My sister-in-law just had a baby a couple of weeks ago, and he is always hungry. He is always eating. When he focuses in on milk, he is not focused on anything else, and he is really getting nourished. I think that is the picture, like, we are supposed to be completely focused on the Word of God and allow it to mature us and give us the nourishment we need to grow up in our faith. Peter makes that clear here, that every time we need to eat, we need to be eating the Word so that the Word can help us grow.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; you know, you wouldn't think that babies could grow so much when all they are getting is milk, right? They are not eating Cheerios yet; they are not getting steak dinners or hamburgers. They are just drinking milk for the first quite a while, and they grow like weeds. I mean, that is just amazing. Now, I think it is Paul who will say now eventually you are going to want spiritual meat, too.

DARRELL DELANEY

Sure.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You have to mature...you have to grow up. Nobody drinks milk forever; but maybe these are younger Christians. Maybe he is aware that these Gentiles in Asia Minor are maybe newer to the faith, so milk is good. You can grow; you can mature; but crave that milk, and then you can grow up in your salvation. Just like a baby grows up, you grow up in your salvation.

DARRELL DELANEY

What is a beautiful thing is that when we crave spiritual milk and it becomes more important to our lives, our palates will begin to change. So, the things that used to be enticing to us in the world...the things that like try to pull out our sinful nature and make us go the wrong way...we will start to want that stuff less and less as we crave the spiritual milk; and Peter says: Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good, you will be able to do that; and I love that that is kind of a wink and a reference, because when he says: Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good, he put an Easter egg in echoing all the way back to the Psalms.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Psalm 34:8: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. Again, a lot of Old Testament references here.

So again, from 1 Peter 1 and the first part of Chapter 2, the first takeaway: Faith is not meant to be dormant; it is active. God has given us salvation. It is the most precious thing we have, and we want to live it out.

DARRELL DELANEY

The second thing is we are called to live a certain way in light of that faith, and that is what we call holiness, because Christ finished the work on the cross, he has set us apart to live for him, even in the midst of suffering.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And a final takeaway here is that the Word of God is like that spiritual milk. When we feed on that Word...when the Word of God dwells in us...it is going to come through in our lives; and we can feed on that Word in lots of ways: through sermons, through Bible study, through devotions; there are lots of ways. So, Peter is teaching some really, really good stuff here; and we are just rounding the corner, Darrell, of Chapter 1. Lots more to come, so we are looking forward to the next section as we move on in this letter; and through it all we say thanks be to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we continue our study of 1 Peter by looking at the remaining verses of Chapter 2.

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SCOTT HOEZEE

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